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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BOOK SOCIETY
11, ADAM STREET, LONDON.

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Church of England Book Society,

11, ADAM STREET, LONDON.

FOUNDED 1880.

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THE

CHRISTIAN COMMUNICANT;

OR, A SUITABLE

Companion to the Lord's Supper:

CONTAINING

MEDITATIONS ON EVERY PART OF THE LITURGY USED BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AT THE CELEBRATION OF THAT DIVINE ORDINANCE.

BY

THE REV. W. MASON.

WITH

A Recommendatory Preface by

THE REV. W. ROMAINE, M.A.

LONDON:
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BOOK SOCIETY,
11, ADAM STREET.

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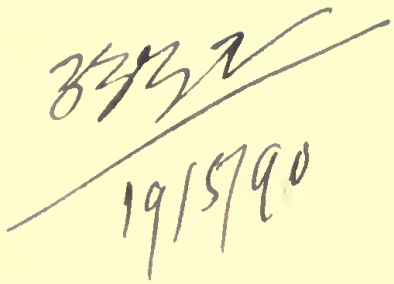

PREFACE.

HAVING occasion to use this phrase—*the faithful of the Church of England*, I hope no one will construe it so, as if I meant that the faithful are found there only. Far be this from me to assert, farthest from my heart to think. While I am persuaded there are faithful members of Christ in the Established Church, who receive "the truth as it is in Jesus" in love, hold it fast by faith, and adorn the Gospel in their lives: so am I equally confident, there are such-like gracious persons in the Churches of our Protestant Dissenting brethren also.

I most sincerely wish the spirit of bigotry and party may be swallowed up in that apostolic truth, "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Oh, may the loving spirit of Christ reign more and more in all our hearts! May He cause us to love as brethren, as brethren of one common Lord, and Head of the whole body! Oh, that instead of the pricking thorn, might come up the ever-verdant

fir-tree; and instead of the goading briar, the fragrant myrtle-tree; as a sign that we are members of the Prince of peace, and for a name, that we serve the God of love!

As to my *judgment*, I firmly believe the doctrines contained in the Articles of our Church to be truly scriptural. In them, the grace of God is laid as the foundation, and Jesus Christ is established as the chief corner-stone in the salvation of sinners. Therefore I do from my heart abide by them.

As to my *profession*, I have never yet been convinced that the Church of England retains anything in her worship contrary to the faith and hope of a Christian; therefore see no cause to dissent from her. Particularly, in respect to the manner of administering the Lord's Supper; in heart and conscience I do acquiesce with the form of sound words therein used. It is, at least to me, unexceptionable. I have often found a sweet savour, and a Divine unction to my soul, in the use of them, and therefore esteem them excellent words.

Perhaps some may censure me as mistaken herein. I have only to reply, I much prefer feeding on the substance, Christ Jesus, by faith, than disputing with a strife of words about the shadow of forms and ceremonies. For why

should we "fall out by the way" to our Saviour's kingdom, about those things which are not essential to it?

Having never seen any work of this kind, my mind was led attentively to consider the spiritual design of our venerable compilers in this prescribed form. I am sensible of my mean abilities for such a work; yet, perhaps, it may be more suited to the capacities of some persons, than if it came from the pen of a person of great learning and fine parts. Such might not be able or willing to let themselves down to the conceptions of the weak. I trust that in simplicity and godly sincerity my heart has been engaged herein, with a sincere aim to promote the glory of the grace of God in Christ Jesus to poor sinners, and a view to their profit.

Christian reader, I humbly commend it to thee, hoping that thou wilt be led from the obscurity of the author, and the meanness of the abilities, to look solely to that sovereign Lord, "who chooseth weak things, and things which are despised," to work by, and to promote the glory of his own grace. Consider, the dainties of our table are served up, and the richest wines are delivered from the hands of mean servants; yet, by the blessing of God,

these are made to nourish our bodies, and to revive our spirits. The most precious seed is cast into the earth from the hands of the menial husbandman; which the Lord of the harvest causeth to bring forth food for the noble and the wealthy. Therefore, if the God of all grace is pleased to administer any nourishment, edification, and comfort, by means of this work, give all the glory to Him; and let the poor labourer share in thy prayers.

To Thee, O Jesu, Thou glorious Head of the Church militant on earth, so also of thy Church triumphant in glory, would thy weak disciple most humbly dedicate this work of faith and labour of love; beseeching Thee, that it may go forth with thy blessing, and be accompanied with thy grace, to the hearts of its readers; so that faith in Thee, love to Thee, and the honour of Thee, may be promoted in heart and life. Fulfil, Lord, thine own word, that "both he who soweth and he who reapeth may rejoice together"—rejoice in thy love on earth, and in thy presence in glory. Even so. Amen.

W. MASON.

CHRISTIAN READER,

I am glad of an opportunity of recommending to thee this little book. Very heartily do I agree with my friend Mason in his Preface, where he wishes for an increase of that Gospel spirit which makes less of outward things and more of Christ. This is truly catholic. May it spread and grow till Protestants have done with contending about their modes and forms, and all unite in exalting the matchless Prince of peace, and in promoting fellowship with Him.

The subject here treated of is one of the deep things of God, of which none can write as Mr. Mason has, unless he be in his heart alive to God; nor can any such understand the nature of the Ordinance, or be fed and nourished at it. It was instituted for the living members of Christ's mystical body. The dead cannot eat; but the living feed by faith upon the flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed, and upon his blood, which is drink indeed; and they grow up thereby into Christ Jesus—a sweet, holy, and heavenly life. Nothing better can I wish thee, reader, than that thou mayest have this life, and have it more abundantly. May these meditations be the means of increasing in thee the comforts of living by the

faith of the Son of God! May all be realized to thee, whenever thou goest to communicate! May every such opportunity bring thee into nearer and happier communion with thy dear Jesus; and every Lord's Supper have more of thy Lord in it, until thou sit down with Him at the marriage-supper of the Lamb! There may thou and I meet! So prays thy hearty well-wisher in Him,

W. ROMAINE.

THE

CHRISTIAN COMMUNICANT.

INTRODUCTION.

As an introduction to the following treatise, it is necessary to inculcate this most important truth—that the Holy Scriptures are the word of God. Therein God speaks his thoughts and reveals his mind to man. As one man speaks his mind and makes known his thoughts to his fellow-creatures by his words, just so doth the Lord to man in his blessed word. It is joyful to consider that the word of the Lord breathes not condemnation and wrath, which might affright penitent sinners from his presence, but, "preacheth peace by Jesus Christ" (Acts x. 36). Hence it is called "the word of his grace" (Acts xx. 32), and "the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. v. 19); for it reveals God in Christ reconciled to his people: and God is in Christ, by means of his word, "reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." This his word assures us of; therefore it is called "the word of life" (Phil. ii. 16), and "the word of salvation" (Acts xiii. 26); for it reveals eternal life to us, and sets everlasting salvation before

us; and by the grace of the Spirit through means of the word, we by faith actually partake of life and salvation. For "the Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 15). So that by faith in this blessed word of the Lord, poor sinners have the most prevailing encouragement, with "boldness and access with confidence" (Eph. iii. 12) to draw nigh unto God. And nothing but unbelief in God's word, in our hearts, can prevent this. It is unbelief which causes any of the sons of men to live without that peace, comfort, and joy which are experienced in the knowledge of a reconciled God in Christ. For as unbelief is a practical rejection of Divine truth, so it is an effectual bar to the happiness of the human mind.

Suppose an earthly monarch were to declare to his rebellious subjects, "I love you; I am reconciled to you." If they believed that what he spoke was the real sense of his mind, how would this expel their rebellion against him, and beget love in their hearts to him! But if, to his declaration, he were to add every kind action which could demonstrate his perfect reconciliation to them, this would most effectually put the matter out of all doubt, and surely cause them to love him again. And while his love was believed by them, their past rebellion could not be remembered without shame and remorse; and nothing but unreasonable doubts and surmises indulged in their minds, of the truth of his word, and the

sincerity of his love towards them, could weaken their affections for him. O Christian, hear the Lord speak in his word; consider the manifestation of the love of God to us in Christ; look into your heart and conduct, and apply this to our Lord's dealing with us, and say, "What could the Lord have spoken more to us? What could He have done more for us, that He hath not done, to assure us of his love?"

And doth our Lord require this to be the rule of our conduct to one another? "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John iii. 18). As though He had said, "To say you love one another, is easy; but to prove it by your actions, this only is the test of love." Now our Lord hath set us an example herein; for He hath taken the very same method towards us, which He exhorts his disciples to follow towards each other. For, did He love in word and in tongue only? Doth He only declare in his word, "I love you, I am reconciled to you"? Nay, but infinitely more. The word of the Lord is not only the declaration of his love, but the history of the acts and deeds of his love. For his word not only assures us of his love, but also acquaints us how this love manifested itself in deed and in truth to us. For,

Love—almighty, everlasting love—beamed forth in the first promise of grace in Christ Jesus, to the sinful, fallen pair in paradise. The Lord appeared in the character of love to the patriarchs. Love manifested itself in the Lord's care and protection of his chosen

people Israel. All the ceremonies and the institutions of the law pointed to and shadowed forth Love itself, who was to come in flesh. The goodly fellowship of the prophets foretold the appearing of Love in human form. The holy evangelists bear witness that the fulness of time is come, that the Son of God is of woman born: they beheld the glory of Love incarnate; they record the miracles of Love in our nature. The glorious company of the apostles testify, that love has brought heaven down to sinners upon earth, to bring apostate, rebellious sinners up to glory in heaven. The noble army of martyrs sealed this truth with their blood, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 19). And this every Christian is called to be a witness of, through faith in Jesus, that "God is love."

Most glorious wonders of love! Most blessed knowledge of faith! God in Christ! God reconciled to sinners! Sins not imputed! But where then is Divine justice, with all its threatened vengeance against sin? Where is the holy law of God, with all its direful curses against sinners? Hath not the law been violated by us? And are we not all justly exposed to the denunciations of justice? Yes, verily, every mouth is stopped; the whole world is become guilty before God; no one soul upon earth has the least plea in himself to entitle him to God's favour. "But (oh amazing love!) God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love

wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins," dead under the sentence of his law, and condemned to death by his justice; even then, He sent—whom? Not an angel, not a myriad of angels, but—his only begotten, his well-beloved Son, to fulfil the law for us, and to satisfy justice in our flesh, by dying in our stead. For "in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John iv. 9). Herein is love—love that exceeds all bounds—love that is beyond all description—love that has no parallel! "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10). Hath not God in Christ so loved us? Doth not his word declare it? Have not his actions manifested and proved it? O then, ye children of the Most High God—O ye saints of Jesus—ye who know the love of Christ—ye are called upon to comprehend what is the breadth of this love, which extends to all the misery and ruins of your fall; to consider its length, which reacheth from eternity to eternity; to contemplate its depth, which let itself down to the low and abject state into which sin had involved us; and to meditate upon its height, which raises us up to the exalted state of heaven and glory!

But, after such ample declarations of the love of God, and such a glorious manifestation of his love in Christ to sinners of mankind, why, oh why, do any of the sons of fallen Adam

continue in open rebellion and wilful disobedience against the God of love? The reason is most plain. They do not credit the word of God; they do not believe in the Son of God: for truly, as soon as the word of God, which is the mind of God, is really believed in the heart, hatred of God and rebellion against Him are expelled from the mind. So soon as God is known, beheld, and believed on, in Christ Jesus, as the God of love, love to God is begotten in the soul of man; delight in Him takes place in the affections, and hope of the enjoyment of Him springs up in the heart: for "we love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). Hence it is very easy to see the distinction between a mere professor of Christianity and one who really is a Christian. The former lives in his natural state of ignorance of the true God and Jesus Christ, without hope of eternal life; he therefore continues in hatred of God, rebellion against Him, and wilful disobedience to his commands. And all this is because he does not know God in Christ, he does not receive Jesus the Son of God into his heart by faith, and he rejects the means of this knowledge, which is the word of God, through an evil heart of unbelief. But "he that is of God heareth God's words" (John viii. 47); "He that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me," saith Jesus (Matt. x. 40); that is, he who believeth on the Son of God receiveth the love, the grace, and the salvation of Jehovah—Father, Son, and Spirit—into his heart.

Thus the true Christian is possessed of what

is not natural to him—faith in God's word, faith in God's love, faith in God's Son, the only Saviour of the lost and guilty. Now to all such as these, the Son of God, our Saviour, when in our flesh, spake these words: "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke xxii. 19). Methinks I see the dear and tender-hearted Man, "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," with his little selected company around Him, and with a look of love, enjoining this his solemn, his dying request to them, "Remember Me." Let my person, my love, my work, and my salvation ever dwell in your minds and upon your hearts. When you think of sin, remember my blood is to be shed to atone for it. When you mourn over yourselves, as the subjects of sin, remember Me, who am the Lord your righteousness. When you think of death, remember Me, who am your resurrection and your life. When you think your sins deserve hell and damnation, remember Me, who am your Saviour, to procure heaven and salvation for you. Therefore, do this: call to mind my love and my salvation, eat bread and drink wine in commemoration of Me; and thus, in eating this bread and drinking this cup, show ye forth my death, till I appear a second time without sin unto salvation. Now, in order fully to meditate upon this dying injunction of our loving Lord to his Church, let us consider these words: "This do in remembrance of Me," under the following particulars:

1. Our Lord's positive command to all his disciples—"This do."

2. The end and design of doing this—"In remembrance of Me." And,

3. The manner in which the faithful of the Church of England do remember the Lord Christ, in the communion of his Supper.

O may the heart of him who indites be under the influence of the Spirit of truth, the glorifier of Jesus; and the hearts of those who read be warmed and comforted with the Divine love of Jesus, while we consider his blessed design in his ordinance!

CHAPTER I.

Our Lord's Command to all his Disciples— "This do."

A DISCIPLE of Christ is one who has been taught to know somewhat of Jesus, in his precious person as God-man, and in his glorious work as God-man and Mediator, as having perfectly wrought out and completely finished salvation for sinners, by the obedience of his life, and the atonement of his death, and also of his resurrection from the dead, ascension to glory, and sitting at the right hand of God to pray for us. This enters into the very essence of the Christian faith; all this is taught in the word of truth, and therefore the belief of this is absolutely necessary to constitute a disciple of Christ. And every one who is thus enlightened to see the Son of God, as coming in flesh, to save lost and miserable sinners, and views himself as one of that guilty number, who must perish everlastingly for his sins, were it not for the redemption in the blood of Christ and justification through his righteousness, is disposed, by grace, to hunger and thirst after the Lamb of God, "who taketh away the sin of the world," —therefore, to all such the dear Saviour saith, "This do."

As though our Lord had said, "Make an open profession in the sight of God, angels, and men, of the faith of your hearts, and the hope of your souls in Me, as the only Saviour, who was

crucified for your sins, and raised again for your justification. Receive these instituted signs of my body, once willingly given up into the hands of men to be scourged, nailed on the cross, and pierced for all your transgressions, and of my blood being freely shed, as an atonement to God for all your iniquities. Behold, in the bread broken, and in the wine poured forth, the outward and visible signs of my love to you and of my salvation for you. Receive these as tokens of my inward and spiritual grace. In this my institution, look through the outward and visible signs wholly unto Me, depend entirely on Me, trust solely in me, look only to Me, and be assured your souls shall be strengthened in faith and refreshed by the love of Me, even as your natural bodies are refreshed and strengthened by eating and drinking the outward elements of bread and wine."

Thus, the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper." How! verily and indeed taken? Yes; but it is natural for those who are carnal to carnalize spiritual truths. And hence it is that we hear of the bread and wine being transubstantiated, and changed into the real body and blood of Christ. Such is the gross absurdity of the tenet of the Church of Rome. But this is agreeable to carnal sense instead of the spiritual views of faith. True, our Lord declares, "He who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 54). But He had before explained his sense and meaning (ver. 47),

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." So that the faithful have eternal life given them in Christ Jesus; and they enjoy this life by faith, before they can eat his flesh and drink his blood sacramentally. While naturally dead in trespasses and sins, a man can no more eat and drink than he can hunger and thirst. Therefore, eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood is not the cause of our having eternal life, but is an evidence and token of the spiritual life of our souls; yea, it is an act and exercise of our faith, and proceeds from the spiritual hunger and thirst of souls after Jesus, the bread of life, as well as it is a test of our obedience to Jesus, who is our life. So again, our Lord saith, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (ver. 57). As truly as a living man finds the life of his body supported by means of natural food, so Christ is verily and indeed taken, received, fed upon, and digested in the hearts of the faithful, by his blessing in the means of this his own institution. Therefore, no object besides Christ himself, his blessed body, his precious blood, is to be looked to, by faith, in this Divine ordinance: and looking to Him, by faith, as the only Saviour, is to reject all trust, hope, and confidence in ourselves, either in our own strength to save us, or our own righteousness to justify us.

CHAPTER II.

Of the End and Design of this Sacrament: Saith our Lord, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

The Holy Communion is a standing memorial of the unparalleled love of Christ, in his precious person, his glorious offices and his finished work, in the redemption, justification, salvation, and eternal glorification of poor, ruined, lost sinners; and is to keep up in our hearts a spiritual acquaintance with our Lord, and a lively sense of his love and salvation in our souls. Therefore,

1. This do in remembrance of his precious person, who is the Son of God from everlasting to everlasting; who also became the Son of man—the Son of Mary—made of a woman—made under the law, under its execration, and devoted to the curse of the law. So that He who is over all, God blessed for evermore, was also made a curse, sentenced to an accursed death, judged to die as an ignominious malefactor upon the cross between two thieves. This, even this person, this God and man in one Christ, we, his disciples, are ever to remember in his supper; to remember that He, the very man who hung upon the cross without the gates of Jerusalem, is also truly Jehovah: "very God of very God." So,

2. "This do in remembrance of Me," implies his glorious offices and the blessed work He hath finished for our salvation. As Jesus was

the Son of God from all eternity, so He engaged in the everlasting covenant to become the Son of man in time, that He might be capable, in that very nature which had sinned, of sustaining those offices for man, and fulfilling all his covenant engagements to God, his righteous Father; that so sinful men might be redeemed, justified, and saved, in perfect consistence with the holy law, Divine justice, and eternal truth, to the glory of the riches of God's free grace; yea, and that we might enjoy the comfort of all this by faith now, before we come to the full fruition of Jesus our God in glory. For, as the poet sweetly sings,

Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.

But if Emanuel's face appear,
My hope, my joy begins;
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His grace removes my sins.

Let us, therefore, distinctly consider the various offices which our Emanuel, the Son of God in our flesh, sustained on our account and for our salvation. These are most joyful to commemorate.

CHAPTER III.

1. *The Son of God became our Surety.*

We are to remember Jesus as made a surety of a better testament (Heb. vii. 22), or

covenant, than the covenant of works. As the surety of sinners, He drew nigh to God, his righteous Father; He interposed between us, the debtors, and God, the creditor. We owed debts to an infinite amount; as finite creatures, we could never pay them; nor could God, in honour to his sacred law and inviolable justice, ever forgive them. We were therefore liable to be cast into prison, there to suffer the punishment of Divine justice, for the violation of God's holy law, to all eternity. But oh, the love of Christ! He placed himself in our stead, He took all our debts upon himself, He undertook fully to satisfy them, and for ever to acquit and discharge us from them all. So that we are freed from the charge and condemnation of God's holy law: "For there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1), and also we have in our Surety that to plead which is more than equivalent to all the demands of God's holy law. For we have the atoning sacrifice and the everlasting righteousness of the Son of God, our Surety, to answer all. Hence, the blessed charter and free grant of that covenant, of which Jesus is surety, is this: "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people. I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. viii. 10, 12). Sins forgiven! Iniquities forgotten! Jehovah himself our loving God, and we his beloved people! and all this because God will have it so, for Jesus is our surety! Shall we then forget, shall we not ever remember our

blessed Surety—He who was seized and arrested by Divine justice—He who bled and died to pay our debts of an immense sum? Not remember Him, through whom all covenant blessings come to us! Him who burst the sealed tomb—disarmed Death of his sting—whose risen body proclaims the mighty debt is paid, justice is satisfied, for the prisoner is discharged! This most beneficent Lord saith to us insolvent debtors, "Remember Me at my table; feast upon my love as your Surety who hath paid all your debts."

CHAPTER IV.

2. *We are to remember Jesus as our Redeemer.*

"As for our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, and the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. xlvii. 4). Even He was "made sin for us, and redemption to us" (1 Cor. i. 30). His precious blood was the price of our sins; this He paid for the redemption of our souls; and with this inestimable price He purchased our forfeited inheritance. "For we know we were not redeemed with corruptible things—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). But man is a corruptible creature. Yes. But though Jesus was a man like unto us, yet not a mere man; for "his flesh saw no corruption" (Acts ii. 31). He was God in our nature; hence his blood is called the blood of God;

therefore with this He purchased the Church (Acts xx. 28).

Hence, this sweet song is introduced in the service of the Church, to his glory: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited (in flesh) and redeemed his people," by his blood (Luke i. 68). "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13). "He hath redeemed us to God by his own blood" (Rev. v. 9). "Yea, He hath obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. ix. 12)—redemption from the wages of sin, which is death; from the curse of the law, which is eternal punishment; and from the infliction of Divine justice, which is everlasting wrath. All this is everlastingly and completely obtained for us. Well might the prophet say, "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return" (to whom, but to Jesus their Redeemer, by faith?) "and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isa. li. 11). Oh, the infinite evil of sin! Nothing less than the blood of the Son of God could redeem from it. Oh, the infinite love of Jesus, to be our Redeemer! In the firm belief of this, how joyful should we be to remember our God-Redeemer! But it might damp our joy to consider that sin had not only sealed us under wrath, and the law sentenced us to death, but had also shut up the kingdom of heaven against us; "for the unrighteous shall not enter the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi. 9): and this we all are by

nature; but "righteousness delivereth from death" (Prov. x. 2), and giveth a right and title to eternal life.

CHAPTER V.

3. *Jesus is to be remembered as our Justifier.*

Are we not all sinners? Yes, verily; for the Spirit of truth declares, "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. iii. 10). But behold, "Christ is made righteousness to us" (1 Cor. i. 30). "For that is his name whereby He shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." This precious name is given to our Emanuel by the Spirit of truth (Jer. xxiii. 6); therefore, by faith, we know He is what the eternal Spirit calls Him—"OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." "His righteousness is unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 22). Thus is fulfilled that word of prophecy, "Thy people also shall be all righteous" (Isa. lx. 21), and hence we hear this triumphant song from each member of the Church of Christ, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. lxi. 10). Oh, how joyful to know, through the belief of the truth, that the shame of our nakedness doth not now appear in the sight of God, but that we are completely covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and gloriously arrayed

in his garments of salvation! How animating to the heart of a Christian to reflect, I approach to God, my heavenly Father, in the very righteousness of his own beloved Son! With what boldness, what confidence, doth this inspire us at a throne of grace below! Oh, with what triumph shall every believer in Jesus be presented, in the rich robe and glorious garments of Christ, his elder brother, above! For there is not one jot or tittle of the holy, just law of God, but what Jesus hath perfectly obeyed and entirely fulfilled for us. This was impossible to any one of the human race ever to do for himself. Because "the law is weak through the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3); not weak to demand, but we are weak perfectly to obey. But, "by the obedience of one"—or the one obedience of Jesus—"shall many be justified" (Rom. v. 19). All who believe in Him are perfectly and everlastingly justified from all things in the sight of God (Acts xiii. 39). Oh, how happy doth the belief of this make the consciences of poor sinners! For those sweet words of Bishop Beveridge may justly be adopted by every believer in Christ: "I believe that my person is as really accepted as perfectly righteous, by the righteousness of Christ's life imputed to me, as my sins were pardoned by God for the bitterness of the death He suffered for them; his righteousness being as really by faith imputed to me as my sins were laid upon Him; so that everything Jesus did in his life, as well as everything He suffered in his death, is

mine. By the latter, God looks upon me as perfectly innocent, and therefore not to be thrown down into hell; by the former, He looks upon me as perfectly righteous, and therefore to be brought up to heaven." (See his "Private Thoughts.")

This good bishop perfectly agrees herein with our Church in the homily of salvation: "It pleased our heavenly Father, of his infinite mercy, without any of our deserts or deservings, to prepare for us the most precious jewels of Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be fully paid, the law fulfilled, and his justice fully satisfied." So that "Christ is now the righteousness of all them who believe in Him." He for them paid their ransom by his death. He for them fulfilled the law in his life; so that now in Him, and by Him, every Christian man may be called a fulfiller of the law. Forasmuch as that which their infirmity lacked, Christ's righteousness hath supplied.

Oh, how precious to the view of faith is this! How dear is "The Lord our Righteousness" to every sensible sinner's heart! Behold, O Christian, how firm a footing for thy faith! Here is the Spirit of truth bearing witness to the righteousness of Jesus, in his word and by the mouths of prophets and apostles, by the holy Church and its faithful members in all ages. Dost thou see thine own righteousness but as filthy rags? Dost thou renounce all trust in it? And is it the cry of thy heart also, "Oh, that I may be found in Christ, not

having on my own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ by faith"? (Phil. iii. 9.) Then art thou under infinite and eternal obligation to thy Lord, who hath delivered thee from that which is natural to sinful man, even pride of, and vain confidence in, thine own righteousness. Therefore, remember Him who had clothed thee with his perfect righteousness, which completely justifies thee in the sight of God. May his blessed Spirit help us to do this in the faith of Him!

CHAPTER VI.

4. *We are to remember Jesus as our High Priest.*

The Holy Ghost presents us with a sweet view of Jesus in this office, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that we should thus know Him, believe in Him, and remember Him: "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man (Christ Jesus) have somewhat also to offer" (Heb. viii. 3). "Therefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, A body hast thou prepared me: lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 5, 7). His precious body was both the gift and the sacrifice, and the peace offering for sin. This He offered to God. This was the will of God. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all" (Heb. x. 10). Oh, the infinite perfection of

his work; it is never more to be repeated. "He hath once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. ix. 26). And "this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God. For by one sacrifice He hath perfected for ever them who are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us" (Heb. x. 12, 14, 15).

See, Christian, art thou sanctified to God, by the will of God, through the faith of Jesus? Separated from the rest of the world, and from thy former natural blindness of mind and ignorance of heart of this great High Priest, Jesus? Then is thy work of offering for sin for ever perfected, thy sins are for ever atoned for to God, and are all put away from before God by the sacrifice of Jesus. Faith is a blessed evidence of this to thy heart: the Holy Ghost is an infallible witness of this in the word: and therefore how peaceful and joyful should thy conscience ever be! For, in consequence of this perfect offering of the body of thy great High Priest, hear the God of truth declaring, "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 16, 17). Blessed, unspeakably and everlastingly "blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. iv. 8). Hence all fear and distrust of acceptance with God is taken away; an assured certainty of access to God is given us. For the believer is not left to that dubious question, "Wherewith shall I come

before God?" But, "having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest (even into the presence of God himself) by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart;" not divided between God and any other object, not looking to, or trusting in, any work or sacrifice of our own; but "in full assurance of faith," that the sacrifice of Jesus for sin is offered to God, is accepted by God, and perfectly satisfies the justice of God; and therefore the belief of this truth brings peace to the consciences of sinners: "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." All sense of guilt is removed from the conscience by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus on it, through faith, "and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. x. 19, 22), even the grace of the spirit of Jesus. Thus "He sanctifieth and cleanseth his Church with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. v. 26).

Thus, O Christian, thou seest the Divine virtue and glorious efficacy of the body and blood of Jesus, thy great High Priest. It hath perfectly prevailed with God. The great atonement for sin is made. "By faith we receive this atonement." And what is the happy effect? Even "joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 11). Oh then, whilst thou livest up to thy blessed privilege, thou canst not but joy in God. Verily, the Son of God, our great High Priest, hath an "unchangeable

priesthood." The very same person who offered himself for our sins, ever lives to pray for our persons: "for we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). Oh this is sweet ever to bear in mind! I have not an infirmity but Jesus knows; not a sorrow and temptation but He feels; not a sin but for which He has atoned. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25). Now, in the face of this, what says thine heart, Christian, to this injunction of thy loving High Priest, "Remember Me"? Verily, thou art called to this high and honourable office, to be "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. ii. 5). "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb. xiii. 15). For, oh wonderful! Jesus has not only "loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, but hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

CHAPTER VII.

5. *Christ to be remembered as our Prophet.*

The spirit of inspiration thus speaketh by Moses to God's people of old: "The Lord thy

God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me;" a man "unto Him ye shall hearken" (Deut. xviii. 15). This prophecy is applied to Jesus by several inspired expositors (Acts iii. 22, 23). The prophets were to reveal, and to instruct the people in, the will of God. This they delivered from the Lord in word. This was all they could do. But Jesus, the great Prophet of his Church, teacheth not in word only, but in spirit and in power also. The words which He speaketh, "they are spirit, and they are life" to the soul of man. We are poor, ignorant creatures. We can know nothing of the love of God the Father and of his Son Jesus Christ, nor of the salvation of our precious souls, but as we are told of them. And we are also so very proud, and so very full of self-sufficiency, that though we were told of them, yet we should for ever reject the things of the Spirit of God and of our own salvation. For naturally we count them foolishness. We set them at nought. But our blessed Prophet will not suffer us to do this to the destruction of our souls. By the power of his spirit, He openeth our understanding to understand the Holy Scriptures; so He maketh us wise unto salvation. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him," says our Prophet (Matt. xi. 27). Therefore He instructs our hearts in the knowledge of his Father's everlasting love, his established council and covenant, the rich grace of his loving heart to his people, in what He

has prepared and laid up for them, and will bring them to the enjoyment of it in a blissful eternity. In all these respects, "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18). So also he teacheth our hearts the transcendent perfections of his own nature, as the Son of God, and what He undertook and hath accomplished, as the Son of man, for us men and for our salvation. All this He makes known and reveals to our minds from his word, by his Spirit; who is "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph. i. 17); and therefore our Prophet saith, "Come unto me," &c. (Matt. xi. 28.) I am meek and lowly of heart to receive you: come, and receive instruction from Me; come, and I will give you rest unto your souls. All those who hear the sweet voice of our Prophet, and come to Him, find rest and peace in the faith of his word: hence He says to them, Remember Me at my table.

CHAPTER VIII.

6. *We are called to remember Jesus as our Advocate.*

Says the beloved disciple, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." But well knowing our present imperfect state, the many corruptions of our evil nature, and

how liable we are to fall into sin, therefore he adds, "And if any man sin"—for who liveth and sinneth not?—What then? must such a poor sinner lie down in despair? must hope give up the ghost? No, blessed be God, praised be Jesus—"we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii. 1, 2). Oh, precious words! He who is the righteous Advocate for our persons is also the full propitiation for our sins. He who is our Righteousness is now "with the Father; for He is entered into heaven itself; He now appears in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24). There He pleads his righteous cause in behalf of our persons, his wounds and scars and blood, as the all-sufficient propitiation for our sins. Have we sinned against God? His blood hath atoned to God. Do we sin? He pleads his blood before the throne of God. But though our Jesus is an advocate for sinners, yet not for sin. Though He loves the sinner, yet He hates the sin. He is the Advocate for our persons; and He pleads that sin should not be imputed to us, but that pardon should be applied to our souls. And as to those very sins which we have committed and do commit, He pleads that "He himself bore them all in his own body upon the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24), and there He made full satisfaction for them; and that, therefore, in justice they ought not to be laid to our charge; but that forgiveness of them should be applied to our souls, for the comfort of our distressed consciences. Thus He is a precious Advocate

for us poor sinners; and in the faith of this He enjoins us, Remember Me, in the bread and in the cup, at my supper.

CHAPTER IX.

7. *Jesus is to be remembered as our Sanctifier.*

THOUGH our sins were pardoned by the blood, and our persons justified by the righteousness, of the Son of God, yet if our hearts were left in their natural, unholy, unsanctified state, alas! we could never love God, delight in Christ, nor be fit for the enjoyment of God and Christ in his kingdom of glory. But "Christ of God is made unto us sanctification" (1 Cor. i. 30). So that, in the faith and fellowship of Jesus, we find our souls partakers of his holiness. The fruit of our being one with Him appears in our affections being raised from earth and all its vain pleasures and sensual enjoyments, to heaven and all its richest glories. Instead of seeking happiness in fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, we aspire after the joys of the Spirit. Instead of placing our hopes of salvation in ourselves and upon anything we can do, we trust only in the blood and righteousness of the Son of God to justify and save us. Instead of living in the pride of our own self-righteousness, and trusting in that, and depending on that, we, with the prophet Isaiah (chap. lxiv. 6), look on all "our righteousness but as filthy rags," which cannot

endure the severity of God's judgment;" as our Church declares, Art. XII., and with the apostle, "we count all our own righteousness but as loss and dung," and desire to be found only in Christ, clothed with his perfect righteousness, and covered with his glorious "garments of salvation" (Phil. iii. 8, 9). Thus Jesus, by the instrumentality of his word and the power of his Spirit, "opens our blind eyes, and turns us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that we may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith which is in Him" (Acts xxvi. 18). He separates us from the world which lieth in wickedness, and also from our own natural notions of pride and self-righteousness, as well as our carnal delight in sin and wickedness. He sanctifieth us to himself in holy love and heavenly delight: and therefore, being sanctified in Christ Jesus, we "give thanks to God the Father, who hath made us meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light." For we are "delivered from the power of darkness, and are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. i. 12, 13). Thus, by being in the kingdom of grace on earth, we are made meet for the kingdom of glory in heaven. By being actually united to, and living in fellowship with, Jesus by faith, consists our sanctification by his Spirit on earth; so in this way it is preserved and promoted in our souls, until we come to the enjoyment of our living Head in glory. We receive out of the fulness of his grace now,

till we are filled with all the fulness of his glory hereafter. Thus the excellent XVIIth Article of our Church declares, "Godly persons feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things," &c. Therefore, saith our sanctifying Lord to all his sanctified brethren, Remember Me, in feasting at my table. Feed upon Me by faith below, till you come to feast with Me in my mansions above.

CHAPTER X.

8. *Jesus is to be remembered as our Shepherd.*

"I AM," saith He, "the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John x. 11). Such is his love to the sheep of his pasture. He hath a distinct knowledge of every one of them: "I know my sheep." He gives them also a peculiar knowledge of himself, "and am known of mine" (ver. 14). "They hear my voice, and follow Me." Oh, we were naturally "as sheep going astray; we have erred and strayed from Him and his way like lost sheep." But such was his tender compassion towards us, that He not only called to us, and sent after us, but He came himself "to seek and to save us when lost." So that through the voice of his precious word, and the guidance of his blessed Spirit, we are returned from the

desert of sin, and the wilderness of destruction; yea, "we are now returned unto the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (1 Pet. ii. 25). He feeds us in the green pastures of his word, by the ever-flowing streams of his grace. He ever watches over us with the eye of his special care. But if He had not sought us, we should never have sought Him at first. And still we are like silly sheep, which tremble, are soon affrighted, and are ready to go away from the shepherd, and lose themselves. We cannot sometimes look back upon the danger and destruction from which we are delivered, without trembling; and then again we cannot help looking forward to the many evils and snares to which we are exposed, without fear. We sometimes look within ourselves, and we see sin and corruption ready to overcome us; and without us, we see Satan going about to destroy us; and around us, we see an evil world ever ready to entice and ensnare us: and therefore are ready at times to fear and tremble, lest, after all our dear Shepherd's love to us, and watchful care over us, we should at last be lost, and perish everlastingly.

But, oh, how do these words of our loving Shepherd forbid our fears and revive our hopes: "I give unto them eternal life!" O, my dear Shepherd, what words are here! Lord, they do indeed give fresh life to our drooping spirits. Dost Thou give eternal life, and give it freely? and to undeserving creatures, too? to wandering, erring, and straying sheep, who are naturally prone to leave Thee, the Good Shepherd, and to seek death and destruction in the error of their

ways? Yes, saith the Lord; and though they deserve to perish, and would certainly "perish everlastingly," but that my love to them is too great, the price I paid for their purchase is too precious, therefore "they shall never perish." They are committed into my hands, and I have engaged in covenant to present them all before my Father. What! though a legion of devils combine with all the wicked men upon earth, yet, "neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Indeed, leave our Good Shepherd, if left to ourselves, we certainly should: but He never thus leaves nor forsakes us. No; "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. i. 5). For, says our Shepherd, "My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all"—than all the power of sin, of men, or of devils; and therefore "none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John x. 28, 29). It is absolutely impossible: for "when the chief Shepherd shall appear" (and all his sheep are looking for, and expecting that glorious day), "they shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away" (1 Pet. v. 4). For then He will present them all to his Father, with, "Behold I and the children which Thou hast given Me" (Heb. ii 13). I have kept them all. I have lost none. Oh, then, how powerful, how prevailing, is the word of our Good Shepherd to all his sheep, Remember Me!

CHAPTER XI.

9. *Our Lord is to be remembered as our Husband.*

What a near, what a dear, what an intimate relation is this! None more so on earth. Yet in this very relation Jesus stands to all who believe in Him. For thus saith the Spirit of truth and of comfort, in his prophetic word, to the Church, "Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called" (Isa. liv. 5). This very prophecy is applied to Jesus, according to the marginal reference to Luke i. 32. What is the conduct and duty of an affectionate husband to his beloved wife? Verily he looks on her with love and affection. He considers her as a part of himself. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loveth his wife loveth himself" (Eph. v. 28). This love influences the husband to supply all the wants of his wife, and to see that she lacks nothing that is conducive to her welfare and happiness. As he took her for better and for worse, he will be contented with what she is and has. He thinks himself bound both in law and love to free her from all her debts and incumbrances. He will strive to make her mind easy and happy, to protect and defend, to clothe and adorn, yea, to nourish and cherish her all her days, "till death do them part." Oh, what a faint view! how infinitely short is all this of the

precious love of our heavenly Bridegroom, the Lamb, to the Church, his bride! She was in deep debt and extreme poverty, in herself deformed and miserable; but He saith, "I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness." What a profusion of precious words are here! all to express the sweet affection and firm faithfulness of our loving Husband to his beloved wife, the Church. He further adds, "And thou shalt know the Lord" (Hos. ii. 19, 50); that is, "thou shalt not only hear that I love in word and in tongue, but shalt know that I love in deed and in truth also. Thou shalt prove my loving-kindness and faithfulness to thee, in the experience of thy heart, to the joy of thy soul." For the Lord "hath so loved the Church, as to give himself for it" (Eph. v. 25). He hath fully discharged all the debts she owed to law and justice. He gave himself wholly to his Church. His blood is the ransom of her soul. His obedience unto death is her justifying righteousness and her glorious dress. Hence the Church, the Lamb's wife, "the king's daughter, is all glorious within," by the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, and she is "clothed in wrought gold" (Ps. xlv. 13). Thus she is perfectly "comely with the comeliness her Lord and Husband puts upon her" (Ezek. xvi. 14). Therefore, thus saith the Lord, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so doth thy God rejoice over thee" (Isa. lxii. 5). And our loving Lord

and Bridegroom "nourisheth and cherisheth his bride the Church" (Eph. v. 29). With his loving words He delighteth our hearts. With his precious promises and assurance of his love, He rejoiceth our souls; and with sweet fellowship and communion with himself, He causes us to foretaste heavenly joys. And as He hath purchased the Church with his own blood, therefore He "rests in his love to it: He is faithful to his Church, which is his body" (Col. i. 24). For, "He is head over all things to his Church" (Eph. i. 22). Therefore, whatever we want on earth, his fulness can supply, and his love will bestow it. And He will never leave nor forsake us, like an unfaithful husband. No; but "He will present us to himself as a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. v. 27). Oh, then, being espoused to this one Husband, with what chastity of heart and tender affection of soul should we ever delight to hear and obey the kind request of our heavenly Bridegroom, "Remember me"!

CHAPTER XII.

10. *Christ is to be remembered as our King.*

Oh, what glorious majesty shines, what deep humility is beheld, in Jesus our King! What earthly monarch ever stooped so low as to visit the meanest of his subjects, and to take up his residence amongst those of the poorest and

lowest sort? But Jesus, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, did this. Thus saith the prophet (Zech. ix. 9), "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass."

Here we are called to adore his glorious majesty, while we admire his condescending humility.

What earthly king ever condescends to take such notice of his mean and low subjects, as to ask them after their affairs, to feel for their distresses, and to reach forth his kingly hand to relieve and supply their wants? But our heavenly King does this by all his subjects. The most mean and contemptible in their own eyes are not overlooked by Him. How doth He visit our hearts, and, by the kind and gentle breathings of his Spirit, inquire after the state of our souls! How doth He tell us in his word, That thing, my beloved, is wrong in thee; the other will do thee harm; this is the way wherein thou shouldst go; walk in it, and enjoy my presence and my love! And therefore our Church joyfully adores, "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ." For there is not an enemy we have but He has overcome and conquered. Is sin the enemy of our souls? "He hath once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. ix. 26). Is Satan our adversary, and would he destroy our souls? Verily, "Jesus overcame him by his blood, and destroyed him by his power" (Heb. ix. 14); and

his advice to us is, "Resist him, steadfast in the faith" of Me (1 Pet. v. 9), and "he will flee from you" (Jas. iv. 7). He may attack you, but he cannot stand against my name, nor withstand my power. Is this present world our enemy? Jesus saith, "Be of good courage, I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33). Are we ready to ask, What comfort doth this afford us, while we find tribulation in the world? Verily, none at all, if sense prevails over faith. But when faith is exercised upon the victories of Jesus our King, viewing them as obtained for us; then we find also that this "is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith. For who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 4, 5). He is the King of saints, who obtained every victory for us and on our account. Faith brings his conquests into our hearts. This endears Him to our souls. This causes us to put our feet upon the necks of our enemies. For our King doth what the most potent earthly monarchs never did nor ever could do. They may enact good laws for their subjects, and cause the violators of them to be punished; but our heavenly King "writes his laws in our hearts and upon our minds;" and, by the sceptre of his love, He sways the affections of our souls, causing us to cry out, "Oh, how I love thy law—I delight in the law of God after the inward man." As faith makes our King Jesus precious to the soul, so love makes all commandments pleasant and easy to the heart. But are not our lusts

and corruptions our enemies? Why, then, doth our loving King suffer such rebels in us, and not destroy them all? Verily, because we have to fight the good fight of faith under his banner against them. And Christ gets daily glory to himself by our victories over them; for his strength is made perfect in our weakness; so that we learn to lean more upon Him, and to love Him more. Thus He keeps down the pride of our hearts, while He keeps up the exercise of faith and every grace on Him. Is death our enemy? Yes, to our mortal bodies, it is. But here also is the victory of our King: death only kills a vile body, that it may be raised and "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body." Death only sends the newborn, imprisoned soul into the arms of Jesus, and to the full enjoyment of Him in glory; for "death is swallowed up in the victory" of our King. So that, in the joy and triumph of faith, we cry out, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 54–57). Shall we not then commemorate these glorious victories of our all-conquering King? O Christian, is Christ thy faithful Friend, thy loving Brother, thy victorious King, upon his throne in glory? Art thou translated into his kingdom on earth? Why then thy doubts and dejections because of thine enemies? Verily, thou hast redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of all thy sins. Oh, look up to Him! Consider his conquests for thee,

and triumph in them. For we are—What? Conquerors? Yea, "more than conquerors," through our dear King who hath loved us. Oh, for stronger faith in Him, and for more love to Him! that we may ever most cheerfully obey Him, who says, "Remember Me."

CHAPTER XIII.

11. *We are to remember Jesus as our Saviour.*

"FEAR NOT," saith the holy angel to poor sinners—Why? Because "unto you is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord," Jehovah the Son of God (Luke ii. 11). His very name implies the nature of his office. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for He shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). He is called Christ, because He is anointed of God to this very office, to be Jesus the Saviour. And though this includes every other office-character of Him already considered, yet a few words upon Christ, as our Saviour, the Lord may make sweet and profitable to our hearts. For this is a most precious and suitable relation to us sinners. We cannot pass it over unnoticed: indeed we should ever be dwelling on it in our minds. For Jesus was born to save; He lived to save; He died to save; He rose again to save us; and He ever lives "to save to the uttermost all those who come unto God by Him" (Heb. vii. 25). When the beloved disciple had a vision of the glorified Saviour, he fell down

at his feet as dead: but Jesus said unto him, "'Fear not; I am the first and the last,' the beginning and the end of salvation; the foundation and the top-stone of salvation. I am the first hope and the last stay of the soul of poor sinners. For 'I am He who liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death'" (Rev. i. 18). Did Jesus once die for us? Doth He ever live to save us? And is He able to save us to the very uttermost? Hath He power over, and doth He keep the keys of, death and of hell? And will our Saviour ever lock up in everlasting death, and consign over to a hell of misery, any of his beloved members, whom He hath bought with his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and enabled to believe and trust in his name for salvation? Oh, no, that is contrary to his precious love and peculiar office as the Saviour. But,

He saves to the uttermost of his almighty power as God. He saves from the uttermost of all our misery as sinners. His work is perfect. He does not save and comfort our souls for a season, and then leave us to ourselves to go on and finish what He has begun: no, but He perfectly and everlastingly saves his people from the guilt and power of sin, and from the punishment due to sin. He is not barely a part, or merely the cause, of salvation. He is infinitely more; He is salvation itself. When He came to Zaccheus, He said, "This day is salvation come to thine house" (Luke xix. 9). And thus it is, whenever the Saviour is received

into the heart of any poor sinner by faith, that day, that hour, salvation is come to that soul. He who believes in Jesus is saved—he hath salvation now. It is meet and right that we should believe and speak after the manner of the Hebrews. They called the Lord their salvation. Thus sung Moses and the children of Israel, "The Lord is become my salvation" (Exod. xv. 2). "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," said Job. Why? Because "He shall be my salvation" (Job. xiii. 15, 16). "The Lord is my salvation, whom then shall I fear?" says David (Ps. xxvii. 1). "Behold, God is my salvation." What then? "I will trust, and not be afraid," says Isaiah (xii. 2). "I will joy in the God of my salvation, says Habakkuk (iii. 18). And says blessed Simeon, with Jesus in his arms, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke ii. 30). He saw Jesus, who is salvation unto the ends of the earth. "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts vi. 12). Thus he who "believeth in the Son of God" is not merely put into a salvable state, it is not only possible that he may be saved, but he actually hath salvation; he hath everlasting life (John iii. 16). "He shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life," says the Amen, our faithful and true witness (John v. 24). He is now passed from the condemnation of the law against sin—from spiritual and eternal death as the consequence of sin—passed into that state of bliss and immortality which our Saviour Jesus Christ hath brought to light through the Gospel (2 Tim. i. 10). But while

partial, mean, and contracted views of the salvation of Jesus are entertained in the mind, they deprecate his glorious work; they dishonour our Lord; just as though He had only done a part, or was merely the cause of salvation—to make it possible to us, and left it for us to effect and finish, by fulfilling terms and performing conditions. Oh, these legal notions sadly cherish unbelief, keep up pride, and contract love to Him. Therefore we should never give place to them, no, not for a moment: we should ever resist and oppose them.

For while we view Jesus as our infinitely perfect Saviour, and that glorious and everlasting salvation which He hath finished for us, whereby He hath saved us from all our sins, and perfectly justified our persons—Oh, then our guilty fears subside, we rejoice in being delivered from a condemning law—from the wrath of God—from the curse of sin—from this present evil world, and from our accusing, destroying adversary, Satan. For He will save us in the hour of death, in the day of judgment, and from all the miseries of hell. Yea, He will save us now by bringing us into the knowledge and love of himself, into a conformity to his image in holiness here, whereby we are meet for the full enjoyment of himself in glory hereafter. And all this He doth perfectly, like himself, who is God. The knowledge and comfort of this salvation He brings into our hearts by his Spirit. We enjoy it by holding fellowship and communion with our Saviour by faith; in living by faith upon Him; cleaving with purpose of

heart to Him; walking closely with Him; and giving up ourselves to his service. And therefore, that our souls might be so happy, and that He might have the glory of all this, He speaks to us poor sinners in love—"I, who am your Saviour and your salvation, say unto you, Entertain the most noble and exalted sentiments of my love and of my salvation in your hearts, while, at my table, you remember Me."

CHAPTER XIV.

12. *We are to remember Jesus as our Judge.*

The very thought of the day of judgment is enough to fill the human mind with dread and horror. For to guilty malefactors (and such we all are) the name of a judge is terrifying. But the name and the person of our Judge forbid our fears and revive our joys. When faith realizes the view of judgment, it affords at once the most awful and delightful prospect. For it is "the Son of man, who shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him; then shall He sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. xxv. 31). That very person, the same Son of man who came to seek and save us who were lost, shall judge us. The same Jesus, who "for us men and our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate: He who suffered

and was buried, and the third day rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; even He shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead." And He himself hath given us the solemn process of that awful day: "Before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. xxv. 32). Here is, first, a universal gathering—all must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Next, a particular separation of Christ's sheep from the devil's goats. Then the sentence of the Judge is pronounced: "He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (ver. 33). In the days of their flesh, He had separated the sheep from the world, and called them unto himself. He had purified them through faith in his name, as a peculiar people, formed for his own glory, and "zealous of good works." And now, lo, He is come to take them to himself. "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (ver. 34).

But were not these sheep once sinners? Had they not committed innumerable sins? Yes; but, behold, here is not the least mention made of them. No, the Judge, as God, is faithful to his own everlasting covenant promise: "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. viii. 12). As man, He bore their sins in his own body on the tree

—He remembers Calvary—there He made a full atonement for them all—and, through this man was preached unto them the forgiveness of sins—and by Him all who believe were for ever justified, acquitted, and discharged from all things (Acts xiii. 38, 39). Thus, through his grace, as God-man and Mediator, they are brought to glory. They were the blessed of God the Father, according to his everlasting love. They were blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, according to his rich grace. They were "predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. i. 3-5). And now his good pleasure is fulfilled upon them, which was to give them the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world: and they being prepared for the enjoyment of it, therefore the Judge saith, "Come, inherit, possess, and enjoy it."

Oh, this precious word from our most glorious Judge, "Come!" How sweet is it now to the faith of our weary minds, and heavy-laden spirits, to obey his loving invitation, "Come unto Me!" And how joyful to find his gracious promise fulfilled, "I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). But, oh, what a rapture of heavenly joy will fill our immortal souls, to hear that glorious sentence from the lips of our gracious Judge, "Come—be for ever with Me—reign eternally in my presence and kingdom!" Then shall be fulfilled those words, which are now precious to our hearts, "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver,

the Lord is our king; He will save us" (Isa. xxxiii. 22).

O Christian, canst thou look forward to nature's dissolution, "when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up"? Canst thou call to mind, that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first"? Canst thou think of the Lord Jesus being "revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all those who believe"? Canst thou think of the awful solemnity of that day, when the Judge, "in flaming fire shall take vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Canst thou read the doleful and bitter cry of such, "saying to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand"? (Rev. vi. 16, 17.) Say, can you meditate on all these tremendous events, and not rejoice to remember that your Judge is your Saviour, your King, your Husband, your Shepherd, your Sanctifier, your Advocate, your Prophet, your High Priest, your Justifier, your Redeemer, and your Surety? Are you not then under infinite and eternal obligations to this precious person, this God-man in one Christ? Are you not bound by every tie of

love to obey his loving voice, who saith, "Remember Me at my Supper at my Table: Me, who stand in such near relations, and sustain such dear offices for you? Blessed, unspeakably and everlastingly blessed, is that man who holds these *twelve* stars of the Redeemer's glory in the hand of faith: he shall have "a crown of twelve stars upon his head" in heaven (Rev. xii. 1). Well might the apostle exhort, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Col. iii. 16); as though he had said, Would you enjoy the peace of God ruling in your hearts, to which you are called in one body? then let that precious word dwell abundantly in your hearts, which teacheth you the person, the offices, the work, and salvation of Jesus. So shall He be endeared more and more to your souls, in every duty and in every ordinance which He hath enjoined you. Thus to know Christ is our greatest wisdom; to possess Him our greatest riches; to confess Him our greatest honour; and to remember Him our greatest comfort. Thus the just shall live by his faith; that is, every justified person shall live upon Jesus, his glorified Head; and out of his fulness shall receive grace for grace on earth, until they are filled with all his fulness in glory.

Let us now proceed to the third general head proposed.

CHAPTER XV.

The manner in which the Faithful do Remember the Lord Christ at his Table, according to the prescribed form of sound words used in the Church of England.

After some Scripture exhortations are read, exciting to love and good works, and the alms for the poor are collected, the communicants are called upon to join in praying "for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth." This is agreeable to St. Paul: "I exhort that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (1 Tim. ii. 1, 3). Then the minister delivers this solemn exhortation: "Dearly beloved in the Lord, ye who mind to come to the Holy Communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, must consider how St. Paul exhorteth all persons diligently to try and examine themselves, before they presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

The Communion of the body and blood of Christ consists of two parts. First, those "outward and visible signs," symbols, and tokens, of "bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received." These are in common to be dispensed to every one in the Church of Christ who professeth to believe in his heart that Jesus is the Son of God, the only Saviour

of sinners; and that therefore he trusts alone in his blood and righteousness for eternal life and salvation. And hence he looks by faith to the second thing in this Holy Communion, "the inward part, or thing signified," namely, "the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." Therefore, rightly to receive this Holy Communion, is to perceive and understand that more is implied in it than barely to join in the outward act of eating bread and drinking wine; but that it is a spiritual act of the soul, looking through the visible signs, to partake of communion and fellowship with the Lord Jesus by faith, and to receive spiritual communications of Divine blessings from Him, to the "strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine." This is called a "Holy Communion," because believers partake of all things in common in and with Christ, their head and representative. All that our Lord did in our flesh was upon our account. There is nothing which He suffered but was for our sins. His obedience unto death was for our justification. His whole life, as man, in all his doing, suffering, and obeying, was to fulfil the will of his righteous Father, and to obtain eternal redemption for us. His Supper is the outward pledge of all this. When He is pleased in it to seal this truth upon our hearts, and to assure our consciences of our interest in Him by his word and Spirit, then it is a most joyful feast of love indeed to our souls. And therefore

to partake of such precious blessings in and with our Head, and with one another, we, his members, "mind to come to this Holy Communion." Thus, by Communion, is meant the spiritual incomings of the grace of Jesus to our soûls, and the outgoings of our affections towards Him.

Let us "consider how St. Paul exhorteth all persons to try and examine themselves, before they presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup." The place alluded to is 1 Corinthians xi. 28, 29, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." Why so? The apostle assigns this single reason, "Not discerning the Lord's body." Here is one plain and easy rule for persons to try and examine themselves by. The only question rests here. It is not, Have I never sinned? Not, Am I perfectly delivered from all sin, both of nature and practice? But, as a poor, sensible sinner, do I discern, do I consider, the Lord's body? Do I in mind and judgment discern by faith, that "a body was prepared him"? (Heb. x. 5.) That our Lord really did assume a body of flesh? Do I believe that his righteous Father truly did lay upon that body "the iniquity of us all"? (Isa. liii. 6.) That Christ actually "bore our sins in his own body upon the tree"? (1 Pet. ii. 24.) That we are "sanctified unto God by the offering of the body of Jesus once for all"? (Heb. x. 10.) And that unless this "temple of his body" had

been destroyed, and raised up again the third day, we poor sinners must all have gone down to our graves in darkness, and our souls must have been sealed up in horror and misery through a dreadful eternity? Do I "discern" and consider that all which Christ did while in the body of flesh was from love to sinners and for their salvation? So that to "discern the Lord's body" is to behold by faith the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world; and who hath instituted this feast in commemoration of his human body once broken, nailed to the cross, and pierced for our sins. And that as truly as I discern, with the eyes of my body, the visible elements of bread and wine, so I really discern and consider, in the faith of my mind, that these are signs and tokens of the once living body of Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, dead and buried: but is now raised again, and is an exalted, glorified body, at the right hand of God for us.

Now all this enters into the faith of a Christian. All this is implied in "discerning the Lord's body." Such a discernment would have prevented the evils complained of in the Church at Corinth. Such a discerning or considering (for our Church useth the latter word instead of the former) is absolutely necessary to the mind and judgment of every communicant. For hereby sin is made hateful, Christ precious, and love and thankfulness to Him are excited in the heart. Therefore this is the fixed and invariable standard for communicants to try

and examine themselves by, before they presume to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For indeed, without this, they can have no communion and fellowship with Jesus in this ordinance; but will rest in the bare external receiving it, and go away just as they came, without having their hearts engaged in it, and their affections attracted to Jesus by it. And then the end of this ordinance cannot be answered by such, even to "show forth the Lord's death till he come." None can do this but such only as desire to be the trophies of his cross, the conquests of his love, and the glory of his crown; that their "faith may be found unto praise, honour, and glory at the appearance of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 7). These the apostle describes (Eph. ii. 1): "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:" quickened to a sense of their miseries as fallen creatures, and to know and feel their wants as miserable sinners. Hence they see themselves under condemnation by God's holy law, destitute of a righteousness in themselves to justify them in his sight and to screen them from his severe justice; for "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them who believe" (Gal. iii. 22). This is the promise "of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Tit. i. 2). Therefore they "flee for refuge to lay hold upon this hope of eternal life set before them" (Heb. vi. 18). As Jesus is their only hope and their only refuge, to Him they flee, on Him

they believe, crying, with David, "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God (Jesus)! therefore I will put my trust under the shadow of thy wings" (Ps. xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7). Here only we can be safe from the avenger of blood. In Jesus alone we can be screened from the wrath of Divine justice. "For we have redemption in the blood of Christ, even forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. i. 7), and in the everlasting righteousness of Jesus, "which is unto all and upon all them that believe: sinners are justified freely by his grace" (Rom. iii. 22, 24). Now, unless the mind be affected with one's state, as having "sinned and come short of the glory of God," and with a real concern to be saved from the wrath of God, neither will sin be hateful in the sight, nor the Saviour precious to the heart; and therefore we cannot remember our Lord's love and salvation at his Table with thankfulness; we cannot show forth his death till He come. The dead in trespasses and sins cannot praise Thee, O Lord Jesus; but the living, the living, they shall rejoice in thy salvation, and give glory to thy name. This the faithful do. Such only show forth the Lord's death. To do this is publicly to declare, and openly to avow, from our consciences, before God, in the presence of angels, our fellow-Christians, and to all the world, in the face of all opposition from without, and all discouragement from within our selves, that the death of the Son of God hath

perfectly finished our redemption and salvation; that we believe in Him, and depend alone on Him, for the pardon of all our sins, the reconciliation of our persons, and the eternal justification of our souls. So that we glory only in our once crucified Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, expecting in Him and through Him, a gracious performance of all God's precious promises, settled in his everlasting covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, and revealed to us in the word of the Gospel, unto our complete salvation, even "until our Lord shall come again to receive us to himself." Now this faith of our hearts we come to confess, ratify, and confirm, by receiving the Lord's Supper.

Hence it is most plain, that in such persons, who do come to the Lord's Table, are necessarily implied these two things: 1st, A right knowledge of themselves, that they are born in sin; that they have committed sin; that they are not now free from sin, in a state of perfection; but are poor, weak, sinful creatures, who are daily liable to sin; are in themselves nothing but sin; are exposed to all the evil, the curse, and the misery of sin; yea, and that they deserve it all too; and can do nothing of themselves to avert it neither; so that they do not entertain a good opinion of themselves, but of their state towards God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For, 2ndly, they believe, according to the Scriptures, that "our Lord Jesus was delivered (to death, and to the punishment of justice) for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). The

belief of this causes them to rest all their hope entirely on Jesus; and to make the life and death of Jesus all their plea with God, for the pardon of their sins and the justification of their persons. So that this faith forbids all self-righteous pleas, self-trusting, and self-sufficient hopes in our hearts. And while it makes Christ and his salvation exceedingly dear and precious to our souls, it makes sin most exceedingly sinful in our eyes and hateful to our hearts. For they see such an infinite evil in sin, that nothing less that the blood of the Son of God could atone for its guilt, wash it away with their consciences, and reconcile them to God. Thus, by this faith, their minds are changed from self-righteous pride, to be abased in humility; their hearts are changed from the love of sin, to delight in God; their lives are changed from the ways of sin to the love of God and keeping his commandments; they are sorry for their past sins, and desire to serve God in newness of life. Now this is what our Church calls "a true penitent heart and lively faith."

CHAPTER XVI.

The Necessity of a true Repentance and a lively Faith.

"THE benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that Holy Sacrament." To sin against God, to reject the

word of his grace and the Son of his love, through the unbelief and impenitency of our hearts—this is natural to us all. But that precious Lamb of God, who died upon the cross for our sins, is "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour," and He gives repentance to our hearts, and forgiveness of our sins (Acts v. 31). For He knows, unless the bitterness of sin is tasted in our hearts, our souls could never feast upon the sweetness of his love. When the Lord destroyed his people's enemies, and saved their souls alive, He instituted the Passover. "The Paschal lamb was to be killed, its blood sprinkled, its flesh roasted with fire, and eaten with bitter herbs" (Exod. xii. 7, 8). This was a type of the salvation of Jesus, who was "the Lamb without spot, fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, to be slain for us; that his precious blood might be sprinkled upon our hearts, to cleanse us from an evil conscience, defiled with the guilt of sin. He was also first roasted with the fire of God's wrath, and his flesh is to be eaten by us in his Supper, in memory of his love, with the bitter herbs of repentance. This is to remind us of what we are, how evil and bitter a thing sin is, and to loathe ourselves as the subjects of it; and in this we experience the great love of God the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Rather than we should perish in our sins, He makes us sick of them, and of ourselves on account of them. For "He convinceth us of sin," of the sin of our nature, the sin of our lives, and of the cursed evil of that heart-sin, unbelief. Oh, then,

when we see its fatal malady, we bemoan ourselves; our minds are changed concerning ourselves. We heretofore thought we were whole, and had no need of a physician for our souls; we had no doubt of our state; we had no fear but we should be saved, as well as the best. Now the scene is changed, our language is altered; we cry out, Undone, undone—we have sinned; woe unto us—we shall perish. But no, there was love in the conviction, there is comfort in its issue, for this is the work of the Comforter. He glorifies Jesus in all this: "He takes of the things of Jesus, and shows them unto us." When we cry, What must we do to be saved? He leads us to view by faith "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world," as revealed in the word of the Gospel. Then, like Saul, when he saw the glory of Jesus, "behold, we pray," we cry unto Him, "Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us. O Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us; grant us thy peace. Graciously hear us, O Christ; graciously hear us, O Lord Christ." But how often have we uttered these prayers of our Church in form and custom! Now they are, indeed, the very prayers of our hearts. For we feel sin now in our consciences; we cannot rest under its burden; we pray the Son of God to take it away. And unless Christ "hear us" and "hath mercy upon us," and "grants us his peace," we cannot be happy; for now we know ourselves, we confess from our very hearts that we are, indeed, miserable sinners. But, glory to Jesus! He is

a most precious Saviour to the most wretched and the most miserable sinners who come unto Him. And glory to the grace of the Holy Spirit, who reveals Him as such in the word, and breathes desires in our hearts to look to Him and call upon Him, to be saved by Him!

For though God the Father, in his everlasting love, gave his Son to us; and though Jesus, from his amazing grace, gave himself for us; yet such is the pride of our hearts, the blindness of our understandings, and the rebellion of our wills, that we should never come to a throne of grace to sue for mercy, nor to the feet of Jesus for salvation, confessing our misery as sinners, expecting relief as insolvent debtors and impoverished beggars, looking to be "justified freely by God's grace," and saved fully and wholly by the precious blood and perfect righteousness of the Son of God. No, indeed; we should ever be quite thoughtless of our undone state, totally unaffected with a sense of our sins, and utterly regardless of our precious souls; unconcerned about God's love to us, and Christ's propitiation for our sins. Yea, in this thoughtless, unaffected way, every one of us would certainly go on to fill up the measure of our iniquity, till death overtook us, hell opened to receive us, and our precious, our immortal souls, were doomed to eternal misery, as the just desert of our sins.

But it is the love and grace of the eternal Spirit that prevents this. Glory to Him for "a penitent heart and a lively faith"! These are inseparable. They are both his heavenly gifts.

He makes our hearts penitent, not to make us miserable, but to be happy in the joys of a lively faith in Jesus. And this lively faith keeps up the penitence of our hearts, for it keeps Jesus in our view and in our hearts; and while we cleave to Him, and walk close with Him, and live by faith on Him, sin loses all its bewitching charms, our hearts are broken on the account of it, our minds are exercised upon the most bitter sufferings of our Lord for it. Hence we mourn, because we still find ourselves the subjects of its evil and defiling nature, which is so contrary to the love and purity of our dear Lord. So long as we have need of faith, we shall have need of penitent hearts. A lively faith in Jesus works a penitent heart before Him; and thus pride and sin are kept down; the sinner is kept humble at his feet; and so he is made meet to come to his Table in peace and love, with thankfulness to the Saviour. Thus a penitent heart turns from sin and self, and, by a lively faith, embraces Jesus and salvation. See then the necessity of these graces in order to come worthily to the Holy Communion. Consider, O ye saints of God, ye disciples of Jesus, to whose grace ye are indebted for them, and give the eternal Spirit the glory of them. But, poor penitent hearts, do you say, with David, "Mine enemies are lively, and they are strong"? (Ps. xxxviii. 19.) Remember, a lively faith draws all its strength and comfort from the lively oracles of God, because Jesus is the sum and substance of them.

CHAPTER XVII.

The great Benefits such partake of.

"We spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood." Repentance and faith give a relish for this Divine food. But oh, what a mystery of love and grace is this! What a rich feast is here for spiritual minds! Oh, the consolation and joy of faith! that we poor, miserable sinners, who, as it were, yesterday, were gone from our Father's house, spent our substance in sin and folly, brought ruin and destruction upon our souls, daring the Most High with our provocations; that we, returning prodigals, who deserve to feed with swine, or perish with hunger, yea, to lift up our eyes in torment, and cry for a drop of water to cool our parched tongues, yet have to-day the richest dainties set before us. What! Angels' food? No; infinitely more rich. For it is the flesh and blood of God's only and well-beloved Son. But—

> Never did angels taste above
> Redeeming grace and dying love.

Here is the work of faith ever to be exercised upon the word of the Lord; for He saith, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 54). This declaration of our Church is the word of Jesus. Says our Church, "We spiritually eat," &c. Faith looks not to carnal, but to spiritual objects. We

believe that as truly as the bread is given us to eat, and the wine to drink, "without money and without price," so verily did the Son of God freely give his body to be crucified and his blood to be shed for our sins; and He now as freely gives us his flesh and blood to be the food of our souls. And He assures us in the truth of his word, that "His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed." Faith realizes this to the heart. Hence a lively hope springs up in the soul, that we, sinful dust and ashes, whose bodies must shortly go down to the silent grave, yet that we have eternal life in Jesus, and He will raise them up again at the last day. Then our bodies shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body; never to know sin or sorrow any more for ever. Oh! what an almighty God is our Saviour! Blessed are they who believe that "there shall be a performance of all those things which he hath spoken." With Jesus, our God, nothing is impossible. Again,

"We dwell in Christ, and Christ in us." This is also a Divine truth. Saith our Lord, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him" (John vi. 56). Oh, blessed mutual inhabitation! All believers are united to Christ. As every member of the natural body is united to, and dwells in that body, so every member of Christ's mystical body is united to, and dwells in Him. We dwell in his heart by love—infinite, everlasting love! Just as any object which is very dear to us dwells in our minds and affections, so the

objects of Christ's love dwell in Him. We dwelt in the love of his heart from all eternity; therefore He came in time to seek and to save us. Through his whole life upon earth we dwelt in his thoughts and affections. Those we love are most in our hearts, uppermost in our thoughts, and are the subjects of our prayers. Thus we were with Jesus. See his most affectionate prayer for us, even before we had a being: "Neither pray I for these alone (his apostles, and then living members), but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word" (John xvii. 20), in every period of time, to the end of the world. Here, O believer, weak believer, yea, the weakest of the weak, even thou art an object of Christ's love! Behold, thy Lord remembers thee—He prays for thee; just as though He had called thee by thy very name. Dost thou believe on the Son of God in thine heart, according to the word? Here then is an answer to thy doubts.

Did we not dwell in Christ's heart by love, when He hung upon the cross? Else why his bitter agonies and painful death? Why the doleful cry from his dying lips? Why his precious death and burial? All was in love to us! all was for our sins, and to save us: for "by his stripes we are healed." We so dwell in Him, that He loved us more than his own life; for as man, He laid down his life for us. Now He is in his own kingdom in glory, hath He forgot us? Oh, no! His love is still the same. All the floods of wrath He suffered could not quench his love, nor wash away our names,

which were written upon his loving heart. He still lives. He ever loves. He for ever prays "in the presence of God for us." He sympathises with us in all our sorrows. He is touched with a tender feeling of our infirmities. He had compassion on us; for He declares, "He who toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye" (Zech. ii. 8). A once bloody-minded Saul cannot worry and destroy his beloved sheep, but He feels it, and calls from heaven, "Why persecutest thou Me?" In all our afflictions He is afflicted. He is the angel of God's presence to save us. In his love and in his pity He redeemed us; and He bears us and carries us all our days on earth, till He brings us to himself in glory. See then how we dwell in Christ by love—"and Christ in us." How doth He dwell in us? Verily by faith. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He right to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John i. 12). What is his name? Jesus, the Saviour; Emanuel, God with us, God in our flesh. We welcome his name, his person, his offices, his work, and salvation into our hearts by faith with joy. God in man—in one Christ, dwells in our minds and our affections. Our thoughts are exercised upon Him; we see no one like Him. "He is our beloved and our friend." Do we each of us see ourselves "as the chief of sinners?" Lo, our beloved is "the chiefest among ten thousand; He is altogether lovely," in all that He is in his person to us, his salvation for us, and his work in us. For He dwells in us by his Spirit. He bears witness

of Jesus to our hearts. He glorifies Jesus in our affections, as our atoning sacrifice, the Lord our righteousness, our living head and representative, our prevailing intercessor, our loving King, to rule in and over our hearts and lives. Thus Christ dwelleth in your hearts, "the hope of glory." Therefore we come up to his Table to confess this, to glorify and praise Him for this, to receive the tokens of his love; expecting in them to enjoy more sensible communion with Him: that so our faith may be strengthened by Him; our love inflamed to Him; our hope enlivened in Him; our affections more set on Him; and that our lives may be more and more devoted to his service on earth, till we come to enjoy Him in glory. Thus, "to them that believe, Christ is precious" (1 Pet. ii. 7). Therefore we can never speak too highly "of precious faith;" we can never extol it too much. Those who think we can are strangers to the nature of Christian faith. "For Christ dwells in our hearts by faith" (Eph. iii. 17). But they think faith is a mere notion in the head, common to all professors, and do not see that it embraces Christ in the heart, and is the very source and spring of all good works. For works which flow not from faith in Jesus, however specious they appear to man, yet, says our Church, they "are not pleasant to God . . . they have the nature of sin" (Art. XIII). Sin has not the dominion over us, because Christ's love dwells in us, and our hearts are purified by faith. See, then, how Christ dwells in us by faith. Again,

"We are one with Christ, and Christ with us." As God and man are one Christ, as soul and body are one man, so Christ, the head, and all his believing members, make up one mystical body. "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one . . . Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." Thus prays our loving Lord to his loving Father, for all his beloved members (John xvii. 23). Oh, the inscrutable mystery of this oneness of Christ and believers! Oh, the insurmountable heights of the love of God to us in Christ Jesus! That God the Father should love us at all is joyful to know; but that He should love us with the very same infinite, everlasting, unchangeable love with which He loves his only-begotten Son, oh, this indeed passeth knowledge! But this is a revealed truth. Therefore, this is the most joyful object of our faith. All is because "we are one with Christ and Christ with us." "He took the manhood into God." Hence, "both He who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one"—of one nature, of one Father, of one body; partakers of one Spirit, one covenant, of one inheritance. Wherefore, Christ is "not ashamed to call us (us fallen creatures, us miserable sinners) brethren, saying, "I will declare this unto my brethren" (Heb. ii. 11, 12). Love is the name of our covenant God and Father; for God is love (1 John iv. 8). He views us in his Son, one with his Son; and so loves with the same love as He loves his Son. We know the love of the Father, because Jesus hath declared Him to us.

All other pretended knowledge of God is but the pompous ignorance of men. The Father's love is manifested to us in the Son; and, being one with the Son, the Holy Ghost sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, and fills us with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13). Our Lord and Head instituted the Holy Communion as a standing memorial to all his members of our oneness with Him, and of the Father's love to us in Him. He inwardly nourishes our souls up to eternal life by his blessed body and blood. Of this, the Holy Sacrament is the outward sign and seal. So our Church declares (Art. XXV.), "Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good-will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him:" even of being one with Him, "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. v. 30). See then how "we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The danger of unworthily receiving.

The minister, having declared the exceeding great and precious benefits which are partaken of by true penitent hearts and a lively faith,

next proceeds to admonish of the contrary evils: "So is the danger great, if we receive the same unworthily: for then we are guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour; we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's body; we kindle God's wrath against us; we provoke Him to plague us with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death."

Awful sentences! not mere human declarations, but are of Divine inspiration. Thus speaketh St. Paul (1 Cor. xi). What doth the apostle and our Church mean by receiving "unworthily"? Who is worthy, in the strict sense of the word, to claim the blessings which the Lord hath to bestow? What poor sinner dare presume to approach the Lord, and say, I am worthy, I am deserving of thy favours? Verily such a thought cannot be entertained in the heart of a real Christian. He knows it springs from pride: he hates it, for it is an abomination to the Lord. We must all plead, with Jacob, "I am not worthy, O Lord, of the least of thy mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shown unto thy servant" (Gen. xxxii. 10). Even St. Paul, who says, "He who eateth and drinketh unworthily," &c., testifies of himself, "of sinners I am the chief" (1 Tim. i. 15). And again, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18). In what then consisted his worthiness? And the very communicants declare to the Lord, in the words of our Church, "We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table." What kind of worthiness do they

possess? So that it is plain, a real worthiness, such as implies merit or desert in ourselves, is not here meant. Yet there is a proper sense or meaning of the word, in which all who come to the Lord's Table must come, or else they come unworthily. This consists in the mind being disposed, or made meet, as is expressed in this exhortation. It is easy to observe, that the whole stress which the apostle and our Church lay, in regard to this matter, is upon these words, "not discerning," not considering the Lord's body.

The want of this renders persons unmeet for the Table of the Lord, and causes them to receive the Sacrament unworthily. For to discern and consider the Lord's body, is absolutely necessary to a worthy partaking of it. This prevents persons from receiving unworthily, and incurring those dreadful evils which are denounced. For this puts the soul into a right frame for this ordinance. But this has been in some measure spoken to already. Yet, in humble hope that the Lord may be graciously pleased to make a word more, even from me, who am less than the least of all, of use to detect what is wrong, and to comfort doubting and drooping minds, therefore I would enlarge a little more on this most essential point.

There are spiritual as well as natural objects to be discerned by us. This is plain from Scripture and the very nature of things. For the apostle saith, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know

them." Why so? "Because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Let us apply this to the discerning our Lord's body in the Sacrament.

The natural man, as Mr. Burkitt observes on this place, "is one who acts only by the principles of human reason and worldly wisdom;" who, though well-furnished with intellectual and moral improvements, is yet destitute of the "enlightening Spirit and the renewing grace of God." Such persons who come to the Holy Communion, can see nothing of the spiritual end of this institution. They look no farther than the outward ordinance; they see nothing more in it than the visible signs of it: these they receive; with these are contented. They think they have done their duty. Conscience is satisfied. The duties they perform build them up in self-righteous confidence. They trust that these will recommend them to the favour of God, and entitle them to salvation. Hence such, if they receive the Sacrament, think all is well. Now this St. Paul calls, "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. iii. 5). For the heart of such a professor doth not discern with St. Paul, that "the law is spiritual," but that he is "carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. vii. 14). Hence he doth not "discern and consider the Lord's body, as once crucified on the cross for our sins, and as now given to us in the Sacrament, to be the food of our souls, through faith. The eye of his mind seeth not the Lord our Saviour; his faith fixes not on Him as the

hope, the only hope of his soul; the love and affections of his heart go not out after Him; therefore Jesus gets no glory of his cross and sufferings from such communicants. And where the heart is not right with Jesus, the life cannot be agreeable to his will. Such souls can get no profit in this ordinance. Of such our Church declares, "The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ; but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing" (Art. XXIX.). The Church here defines who are the wicked. Observe, they are not distinguished as guilty of gross and abominable sins, but as "void of lively faith;" therefore are in no wise "partakers of Christ." Again (Art. XXVIII.), "The Supper of the Lord is a Sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ." The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean (or medium) whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith. Thus scripturally speaketh our Church. Would to God that all who profess to be members thereof would solemnly, as in the presence of a

heart-searching God, consider this, and examine themselves as to this momentous point, before they presume to come to the Lord's Table! Is the body of Christ eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner? Is a lively faith the mean by which it is received and eaten? Are all such as are void of this faith, the wicked, who only receive the signs, but are not partakers of Christ? Am I then worthy? Am I rightly disposed to receive the Supper of the Lord? For it rests upon this simple question, Have I received this heavenly, this spiritual gift, precious faith? Do I believe that the Son of God is the only Saviour for guilty, lost sinners, to trust in for salvation? Do I see, in the history of the life and death of Jesus Christ, such a wonderful display of the glorious love, the infinite wisdom, and the rich grace of Almighty God to sinners, as forbids despair, encourages hope, attracts my heart to Christ, and kindles desires to love God and to be a willing disciple of our blessed Saviour? And am I now going to his Table, in hopes of finding fellowship with Christ, and feeding upon Christ in my heart, by faith, with thanksgiving? If so, this is truly to discern, this is rightly to consider, the Lord's body. Let not such souls write bitter things against themselves, nor draw harsh conclusions upon themselves, from the solemn yet absolutely necessary declarations of our Church. For they are not levelled against them; they are not intended to "break the bruised reed, nor to quench the smoking flax;" nor designed to distress weak

faith, deject trembling hearts, nor to disquiet doubting minds and contrite spirits who seek Jesus sorrowing. Our Saviour would not have it so. But He saith, "To this man will I look, even to him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. lxvi. 2). "For (hear, O ye poor sensible sinners, and be comforted) thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who also is of a contrite and humble spirit," even to this blessed end, "to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. lvii. 15). Are we then sick of sin? Are we sick of ourselves as the subjects of sin? Do we see ourselves as guilty, perishing, lost sinners? Verily, Jesus came to seek and to save such.

> Where, then, my boast of immortality?
> I boast it still, though covered o'er with guilt;
> For guilt, not innocence, his life He poured:
> If sick of folly, I relent, He writes
> My pardon free with that inverted spear,
> A spear deep-dipt in blood, which pierced his side.
>
> *Night Thoughts.*

Blessed be God! we may truly pronounce of such sin-sick souls, what Jesus did of Lazarus. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (John xi. 4). For the Spirit "convinceth our hearts of sin," that He may glorify Jesus in our hearts by faith. "He taketh of the things of Christ, and showeth them unto us," that we may trust in Christ's love to us, and glory in his salvation of us.

Therefore, such are made meet to come; and such should come to the Lord's Table, to glorify Christ, and to praise God the Father for his unspeakable gift of his beloved Son, in spite of all objections and discouragements to the contrary. For thus, in obedience to the institution and command of Jesus, they may expect to enjoy the communion and comfort of God the Holy Ghost.

But, without this inward discerning and considering the Lord's body, the minister declares, "We are guilty of the body and blood of Christ." How are any thus guilty? The Papists are guilty of the body and blood of Christ, in supposing that these are actually changed into the real substance of creatures of bread and wine. This is to dishonour and undeify the Lord of life and glory. This destroys the very nature of this ordinance. So those who protest against this error of transubstantiation are also guilty of the body and blood of Christ, who, as it were, deify the outward elements of bread and wine, so as to put such trust and confidence in the bare act of receiving the outward signs, as if nothing more was intended by this institution. For they conclude, because they have been at the Lord's Table, they are real Christians; their state is safe; their sins are pardoned; and think that by receiving the Sacrament they have made their peace with God. This also is to change the nature of this ordinance. The life of Jesus is not manifest in such. They have no spiritual view of Him. They trust to their duties, instead of trusting

in Him. They have no right knowledge of Him in their understanding, true belief of Him in their hearts, real love to Him in their souls, nor devotedness to his glory in their lives. They live just as the rest of the world do. Strangers to the spiritual joys of Christianity, and seeking all their happiness from the objects of sense. Hence, some such communicants (awful to mention!) live in gross sin, fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

Now surely all such are guilty of the body and blood of Christ, in coming to the Lord's Table. For they, in the full sense, are guilty of a wilful breach of the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." And the Lord declares, "He will not hold them guiltless who take his name in vain." But this they actually do in the words of the Communion Service. They beseech the Lord to "cleanse the thoughts of their hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that they may perfectly love Him, and worthily magnify his holy name." When, alas! they had no real desires of heart perfectly to love the Lord; no solicitous concern worthily to magnify his name in their lives; nor any real belief in their minds of any such thing as the inspiration of his Holy Spirit. Again, they confess unto the Lord, that they "bewail their manifold sins and wickedness—that they earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for their misdoings—that the remembrance of them is grievous, and the burden of them is intolerable." They cry for mercy and grace "ever hereafter

to serve and please God in newness of life."—But if their hearts have not felt what they confess of sin, and their desires go not with their lips to be saved from sin, and to walk in newness of life, what is all this but to take the name of the Lord in vain? Is not this to be guilty of the body and blood of Christ? Is not this to receive without any inward reverence of mind and godly fear of heart? Verily, such are condemned for what they do. Their own act testifies that they are guilty. "They eat and drink their own damnation," or rather condemnation. For the word is not used by the apostle, nor our Church, to express eternal damnation. This is plain from what follows, both in the apostle's writing and the Church's declaration: they "provoke God to plague them with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death."

CHAPTER XIX.

A solemn Charge to Self-examination.

"JUDGE therefore yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord: repent you truly for your sins past; have a lively faith in Christ our Saviour; amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with all men: so shall ye be meet partakers of these holy mysteries."

Self-judging is a means to prevent self-deceiving: this our Church requires, as absolutely necessary for a right receiving of the Lord's

Supper. Impenitent persons are unfit for the Table of the Lord. Those who are void of a lively faith in Jesus are not proper subjects for it; a life of sin is contrary to the holy nature of it. An uncharitable heart and an unforgiving spirit quite indispose for this feast of love. Now, after so faithful a charge, should we not, in the judgment of charity, conclude that no one would presume to come to the Table of the Lord without "repentance for their former sins, a steadfast purpose to lead a new life, have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, a thankful remembrance of his death, and be in perfect charity with all men"? But suppose such do come (and, indeed, it is to be feared and lamented that there are too many of this number, not only in our Church, but in others also), what then? Will any infer from hence, that the Church of England is not a Church of Christ? that the Lord's Supper is not duly administered there? that there are none of Christ's real members who communicate there? Indeed, a revival of the ancient discipline of the Church is much wished for by the godly among us. And is it not too much neglected in other churches also? Still there are, doubtless, a very great number of members of the Established Church who "worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," and who also adorn the Gospel of Christ in their lives. But if any think otherwise, and would cavil and dispute about outward modes and ceremonies, and seem to be contentious, we say with the

apostle, "We have no such custom, nor the Churches of God" (1 Cor. xi. 16). If they cannot abide with us, but think their souls will prosper more elsewhere, let them depart in peace. We have no artillery of anathemas, like the Church of Rome, to discharge against them. Jesus, our Master, hath taught us better. We entirely agree, as touching unworthy communicants, with a learned expositor, who was minister of a dissenting Church. In regard to the unworthy members in the Church of Corinth, he says, "Let it be observed, that such a one is said to eat and drink this judgment or condemnation to himself, and not to another. He is injurious to nobody but himself. This may serve to make the minds of such easy, who are not so entirely satisfied with some persons who sit down with them at the Lord's Table, when they consider it is to their own injury, and not to the hurt of others, they eat and drink, not discerning the Lord's body." (See Dr. Gill on 1 Cor. xi.) Oh then, let us be concerned to fix the eye of our faith more steadily on the Master of the feast! If we see any whom we think unworthy guests, let us judge ourselves. If grace has made us to differ, let us give our Lord the glory. Let us look on others, not with a censorious eye of contempt, but with pity and prayer. For what have we which we have not received? We have no cause for boasting, it is excluded by grace. This truly humble, catholic spirit, our Church teacheth us.

For what gives any poor sinner a right to the Table of the Lord? Verily, the Lord's gracious

invitation. What gives a title to the benefits and blessings of it? Our Lord's free and gracious promises. How are any made meet to partake of these holy mysteries? Truly, we must each unite with the apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 10). Have I precious faith? "It is the gift of God" (Eph ii. 8). Have I true repentance? Jesus is exalted; He bestowed it (Acts v. 31). Have I charity or love? It is a "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22). It is an "excellant gift, poured into my heart by the Holy Ghost." Do I "follow after holiness"? It is because "Christ is made of God sanctification unto me" (1 Cor. i. 30). What is the end of coming to the Lord's Supper? To remember the love of Jesus in becoming the Saviour of sinners, and in dying for sin; to feed on Him by faith, while we obey his will; to show forth his death till He come, that we may grow up more in the grace which is in Him, and in the knowledge of Him in our hearts; that so we may glorify Him more and more, with our lips and in our lives. Thus are we to judge ourselves—to judge concerning our state in Jesus, as to our faith, repentance, love, and obedience, flowing from Him.

CHAPTER XX.

An earnest Exhortation to Praise and Thanksgiving.

"And above all things ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to God, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost, for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man; who did humble himself, even to the death upon the cross, for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death; that He might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life."

Here observe—1. The reason why the Church so frequently insists that faith is absolutely necessary to make any one a meet partaker of this ordinance; for, as faith begets love to God, and works by love to Him, so it is the source and spring of praise and thanksgiving to Him.

2. The object of the Christian faith is, God in Trinity. God engaged in covenant love, solemn oath, precious promises, and everlasting faithfulness, to redeem, justify, and glorify us miserable sinners; therefore—

3. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are to be equally praised and adored for our redemption. God the Father's love is the first source of it. He so loved us that He gave his Son to us. God the Son in human flesh, "God and man in one Christ," gave himself for us; and, by his death upon the cross, hath obtained

eternal redemption, both of our captive souls and our forfeited inheritance. And God the Holy Ghost enlightens our understandings, regenerates our hearts, and leads us to Jesus for salvation, and seals us through the faith of Jesus unto the day of redemption. And, O ye faithful! to heighten your love, to animate your gratitude, and to quicken you to praise, consider—

4. "The cross and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man." Oh, what a depth of deepest humility! What a scene of direful suffering, of greatest love! There Christ the ransom paid; the ransom infinite He fully paid. Yes, and what exalts the bounty more, it was paid for us; us, sinners against God's holy laws; us, rebels against God's government; us, "enemies to God in our minds." For, "in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6); died, in greatest agony, the most accursed death on the cross.

> Sun! didst thou fly thy Maker's pain? or start
> At that enormous load of human guilt,
> Which bowed his blessed head, o'erwhelmed his cross,
> Made groan the centre, burst earth's marble womb
> With pangs, strange pangs, delivered of her dead?
> Hell howled; and heaven that hour let fall a tear:
> Heaven wept that man might smile; heaven bled, that man
> Might never die.

Sinners! believe, adore, rejoice, and love; for—

> To man the bleeding cross has promised all;
> The bleeding cross has sworn eternal grace;
> Who gave his life, what grace shall He deny?
> Seest thou, O sinner, where hangs all our hope?
> Touched by the Cross we live.

"Live not unto yourselves, but unto Him who died for us, and rose again." Ever view,

then, O soul, the sovereign cure of death, the eternal source of life, "God and man in one Christ," on the accursed tree.

> There hangs all human hope: that nail supports
> Our falling universe; that gone, we drop:
> Horror receives us. . . .
> Oh, what a groan was there! A groan not his;
> He seized our dreadful right, the load sustained;
> He heaved the mountain from a guilty world.

Oh, with what transports of soul, in the views of faith, may we cry out—

> With joy, with grief, the healing hand I see;
> The skies it formed, and now it bleeds for me,
> . . . Survey the wondrous cure;
> And at each step let higher wonder rise.
> Pardon for infinite offence! And pardon
> Through means that speak its value infinite;
> A pardon bought with blood, with blood Divine;
> With blood Divine of Him I made my foe;
> Persisted to provoke! Though wooed and awed,
> Blessed and chastised, a flagrant rebel still;
> A rebel 'midst the thunders of his throne!
> Yet for the foulest of the foul He dies.
> Bound, every heart, and every bosom burn!
> Oh what a scale of miracles is here!
> Hail, heaven! All lavish of strange gifts to men!
> Thine all the glory, man's the boundless bliss.
>
> *Night Thoughts.*

5. To keep down the risings of pride, remember that you "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). The deplorable condition you were in; you "lay in darkness," without sight of your danger, without light to see your own misery; for you were even in the shadow of death: your eternal state was suspending on the slender thread of life. Had it been possible for that to be broken ere your spirits had been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, your souls must have sunk from the shadow of death into the gulf of

eternal death itself. Yet you were quite easy and thoughtless! Oh, can you look back upon your miserable estate, without shuddering to see what you have escaped? Can you behold the love and grace of the Holy Trinity, without most humble and hearty praise? Can you see what you now are by grace, without comfort? Can you look forward to the heavenly world, with hope of enjoying God your Father, Christ your Redeemer, the Holy Ghost, your Sanctifier, without joy and gratitude? For you are not only delivered from your depths of misery, but raised to the heights of mercy.

6. "Redemption by the death and passion of Jesus is to make us miserable sinners the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life." To make us children of God! Consider this exalted blessing. By nature we are not the sons of God, but the children of wrath. It is by the free favour of God's adopting love, we are put among his children! we could do nothing to deserve this. But Jesus has redeemed us to this blessed privilege. Oh, the amazing wonders of his redemption! What a glorious change doth it make in our state! What exalted privileges doth it bring us to the enjoyment of! for "we are by nature the children of wrath, even as others." We are miserable sinners, as well as others. Our carnal minds are enmity against God's law, and our lives and practices were contrary to God's commands, like others; yet, that such rebels should be made his beloved, his adopted children, oh, what sovereign love! oh, what special grace is this! One is

almost ready to say, How can this be? Surely this news is too good to be true; one can scarce believe it for joy. Ah, we are indeed too slow of heart to believe the truths of our God and the love of our Saviour; hence our hearts are so cold to the love of Him, and our praises too oft freeze on our lips. Had not Jesus obtained this blessing, did not the Spirit of truth bear witness to it in the Word, then, indeed, to believe it would be bold presumption; but now to reject it is criminal unbelief. The beloved disciple ushers it in with, "Behold!" (take special notice, dwell with delight upon it, O ye sons of fallen Adam), "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John iii. 1). So the Psalmist, in admiration, breaks out, "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and on earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill"—all expressive of our abject state of misery and wretchedness—"that He may set Him with princes, even with the princes of his people" (Ps. cxiii. 5-8). A prince, we know, is the son of a king. Jesus is called a Prince (Acts v. 31). He is the Son of God by generation. We are made princes, as being the sons of our heavenly King, of our Father God, by regeneration and adoption.

But how was this effected? We are told, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made

under the law, to redeem them who were under the law" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). We are under obligation to fulfil the moral law in all its righteous precepts, to the uttermost perfection, in time, or else we incur all its dreadful curses to all eternity. But we never could fulfil the former, and therefore are liable, as transgressors, to suffer the latter. But the Son of God was made under the law, both to fulfil all its righteous demands and to suffer all its rigorous penalties in our stead. Eternal praises to his name! this He hath perfectly done; He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, "being made a curse for us." And thus through Him this Divine blessing comes to us, "that we might receive the adoption of sons." How do any receive this? St. John tells us (i. 12), "To as many as received Jesus, to them gave He right to become sons of God, even to those who believe on his name." So St. Paul, "Ye are all the children of God by the faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26); and, saith St. John, "Now are we the sons of God" (1 John iii. 2). How did He know this? Even by one and the same way which is common to all converted Christians—by faith in the heart; by "the belief of the truth;" by "the truth dwelling in us;" and, "because we are the sons of God (through faith in Jesus), God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). Without faith in Jesus, we cannot receive the witness of his Spirit; but, believing in his name, "the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirits, that we are the

children of God" (Rom. viii. 16). Thus this matter is made clear and plain to us. And it is of great moment that this hope, that we are the children of God, be kept clear in the conscience. For this sweetens our tempers and purifies our hearts. "And every man who hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3). Christ's redemption not only makes us the children of God here, but exalts us to everlasting life hereafter: for, if we have faith in Jesus, we are the sons of God; and if sons of God, then our salvation is sure. Oh, how plain! how joyful this reasoning! "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17). "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God (led to believe on the Son of God), they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14).

Lastly. Blessed be God, we are not left in ignorance, to erect an altar "to the unknown God." We know whom we worship. As the children of men know their earthly father, so the sons of God know their heavenly Father. They know Him manifested in Christ; they love Him in Christ; they give Him the praise of their redemption and salvation in Christ. This comfortable knowledge they are taught by the Word. They receive it into their hearts from the Spirit of truth, by faith. And the Lord's Supper is instituted as a blessed means to keep up a lively remembrance of our redemption and adoption in our hearts and minds, and to excite the praise of our spirits to our Triune God.

CHAPTER XXI.

THEREFORE the minister further declares *the kind invitation of our Lord to us in this ordinance:*—

"And to the end that we should alway remember the exceeding great love of our Master, and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding He hath obtained to us; He hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort."

Every sentence breathes the love of our God-Redeemer, and tends to inspire our hearts with love and gratitude to Him. Here consider—

1. Christ was inconceivably happy in the bosom of his heavenly Father from all eternity. But such was his exceeding great love to us, that He came from heaven, to wade through a hell of agony, punishment, and death on earth, to make us happy with Him in glory. Without his precious blood-shedding, He knew we must have been eternally miserable; but by it He hath obtained eternal life and glory for us.

2. He knows what is in man; how prone the best of us are to be fond of trifles; how apt to forget Him who is our best and dearest Friend, and to be unmindful of our richest blessings. But He will not have us so to be. For, as "He hath prepared for us such things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered

into the heart of man" (1 Cor. ii. 9), therefore He will have us to be happy now in the enjoyment of them, through faith in Him. And hence—

3. He hath instituted these holy mysteries, as pledges to assure us of his love. The first-fruits of the earth were pledges and earnests to the Jews of the ensuing harvest. The earnest they had in hand: the harvest they were sure to reap in due season. They presented the first-fruits before the Lord, both as an acknowledgment of his mercy in giving them the earnest, and of their faith in Him for the expected harvest. Thus it is with the Christian. Hence how sweet to believe and meditate thus in one's heart! I am here an inhabitant of a body of sin and death, am the subject of manifold corruptions, experience many uncomfortable frames and feelings, and these are often attended with gloomy apprehensions; so that were I to look only to what I find in myself, alas! dejection and despair would seize on me. But, my blessed Master and only Saviour hath given me an inward earnest of my inheritance, the first-fruits of the Spirit, whereby the desires of my soul are drawn to Jesus, and also outward pledges, to assure me of his love. Therefore He cannot be unfaithful to his word; He will not deceive my hopes of the fulness of good things to come and of the greatest blessings to be enjoyed; even "the innumerable benefits, which by his precious blood-shedding He hath obtained" for me; hence my spirits revive, and I am comforted. For—

4. This "holy mystery" is also "to our great and endless comfort." Christ knows what fools we are, and how slow of heart to believe; therefore He hath given us outward signs and symbols, as a mean or medium to help our faith, and lead us continually to remember Him to our comfort. Doth our great and endless comfort arise, and is it maintained in our hearts, by the continual remembrance of Christ's death and blood-shedding only? Oh that, in the belief of this, we may be ever exercising our thoughts upon Him; looking more continually to Him; be ever remembering Jesus at his Table, and looking off from every object beside Him, for comfort of mind, purity of heart, and eternal salvation of our souls! But—

5. Will any one say, Cannot I remember Christ without receiving the Sacrament? Is not the Spirit of Christ able to keep up the memory of his love in my heart without these outward and visible signs? Thou mightest as well ask, Cannot I be a sincere disciple of my Master, Jesus, without obeying his commands? Verily, such reasoning is not good? it is not the fruit of simple faith and sincere love; it doth not discover an humble, obedient mind. For hath not Christ instituted an outward pledge and earnest of his love? Shall we refuse it? Are we wiser than He? O soul, ever remember, "God gives his Holy Spirit to those only who obey Him" (Acts v. 32). When Jesus had by a miracle raised the daughter of Jairus to life, He would not keep her alive by a miracle, but "commanded that something should be given

her to eat" (Mark v. 43). Beware, therefore, O Christian, of living in disobedience to the Lord's command. Consider, thy growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is connected with thy duty. Away, then, with all such reasoning, which is not from faith in thy Lord's word, and which tends to deprive our souls of that "great and endless comfort" which is enjoyed in this continual remembrance of Him.

O soul—whatsoever thou art, whosoever thou hast been, though even the vilest of sinners, yet if now thou hast faith in Jesus in thy heart, and the desire of thy soul is toward Him, to save thee from thy sins—oh, come, and remember thy Lord's love at his Table. Thou art bound to this by all the ties of love and gratitude. Let not Satan, the enemy of thy soul, nor thy own carnal reasonings, fears of unworthiness, scruples of unfitness, keep thee away, and so prevent thy soul receiving great and endless comfort from thy loving Saviour. But come and join thy fellow-redeemed sinners in ascribing to Jesus the glory of his grace and salvation, saying, "To Him, therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, let us give (as we are most bounden) continual thanks; submitting ourselves wholly to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve Him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. Amen."

In all things to submit wholly to the will of Jesus our God is our bounden duty, as his followers. To study to serve Him in true holiness

and righteousness is our highest honour, as his beloved disciples; to this we are called; to this faith enjoins, and love ever constrains. And this Sacrament ever tends, through the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, to keep up the vigour of faith in Jesus, the ardour of love to Jesus, and the life of devotedness to his service.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Minister's affectionate Address to the Communicants.

"Ye that do truly and earnestly repent, &c., draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort." Ye precious souls, who know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed in his word, and therefore believe in his name, repent of your sins, have love and charity in your hearts, and desire to glorify the Lord Christ by the obedience of faith; approach to his table in person, and draw near to your Lord in faith, "and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort." Faith in your Lord's word is your warrant to come; and through faith expect comfort. But you are ready to draw back, because you still find and feel that you are a sinner? Are you ready to say, How can I, who am the subject of sin, be a fit guest at the table of a holy Lord? Nay, but remember, it is not a good opinion of thyself, but a right view of the Lord's love, and a steadfast faith in his name, that puts the soul in a right frame

to come in. To whom then wilt thou go? Whither wilt thou flee to hide thee from the presence of the Lord? From whom canst thou obtain relief of conscience, pardon of sin, and peace of mind? Because thou art a sinner, wilt thou therefore flee from the precious Saviour, who is a God of love, rich in mercy, and abundant to pardon? This is the way to be "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Because thou hast sinned, wilt thou therefore turn thy back upon Jesus? What! upon Him "whom God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance and forgiveness of sins"? (Acts v. 31.) Nay, but this were to add provoking unbelief to thy numerous sins; yea, to forsake thy own mercies, and to act a base, ungrateful part to thy best Friend. To whom then should a sin-burdened conscience, a heavy-laden soul, betake itself, but to Him who saith, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest"? See the humble confidence of David's prayer: "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity (amazing plea!), for it is great" (Ps. xxv. 11). A true sight and sense of sin is given us for these very ends and purposes: to humble the soul under it, to break the heart for it, to make us sick of it and sorry for it, to cause us to flee from it, to the Friend of sinners, for pardon and deliverance, both from the guilt of sin in the conscience, and from the power of sin in the life and practice. Thus is Jesus truly believed on and honoured, as the Saviour, who saith, "Turn, O backsliding children; for I am married to you. Return, ye

backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Oh, precious, encouraging words, when received in faith: then the reply of our hearts is, "Behold, we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God" (Jer. iii. 14, 22.) Here see the necessity of faith—of drawing near with faith.

Methinks I hear the Lord of life and glory putting this close question to us, which He once did to his beloved diciples in the days of his flesh, "Will ye also go away? Have you seen that in my conduct towards you, have you heard that from my words to you, which tends to dishearten your minds, and discourage your souls?" As He said to his Church of old, "O generation, see the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will no more come unto Thee?" (Jer. ii. 31.) "Oh, base ingratitude! for what could I have done more to manifest my love to you that I have not done? And still doth there remain a single thought in your hearts of turning your back upon Me, and of forsaking Me?" Oh, may the thought of this quicken our faith, animate our hope, and draw out our affections to our loving Saviour; so that with Peter we may answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Though we have sinned unto death, yet Thou—Oh, glory for ever to thy grace!—"Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John vi. 68). To Thee, therefore, we will come, and confess what we are—sinners; believing what Thou art, the Saviour of sinners; the God who receiveth and justifieth and forgiveth

sinners; to Thee we will come, pleading this encouraging warrant of thine own word, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). Thus evangelical faith in the heart causes the sensible sinner to draw nigh to God, opens the heart in humble confession of sins before Him, and encourages hope of pardon from Him; and this in a way of justice and faithfulness. The faithful soul is deeply affected with a sense of sin against the Lord; because he considers his sins as committed, not so much against a God of terror and wrath, as against a loving, affectionate Father in Christ Jesus. Therefore, as exhorted, he is led to "make his humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon his knees."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The humble Confession of the Faithful.

"Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men: we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us;

the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please Thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Upon this humbling, self-abasing confession, observe—

1. That as faith forbids sin, most powerfully, so it humbles the soul under the sense of sin most deeply; while it beholds and applies to the remedy against sin, and the pardon of sin most joyfully, and influences to holiness most effectually.

2. That the faithful are still the subjects of sin. Those who think that they are not cannot join in this Confession; nor indeed do they need either Christ to save, faith to justify, or the Sacrament to comfort them. Sensible sinners only rightly confess sin, and are "heartily sorry" for it; they only feel it "grievous to their remembrance," and an "intolerable burden" upon their conscience. For, though the fear of wrath and the dread of hell be taken from them, yet the sense of love quickens their grief and heightens their sorrow for offending against their heavenly Father. Therefore—

3. With vehemence of spirit they repeat their cry, "Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us," not most wrathful Judge, but "most merciful Father." Though sin hinders the comfortable enjoyment of the Father's love in his children's heart, and interrupts their sweet

fellowship with Him, yet our Church teacheth us to call God Father still; thereby instructing us that sin destroys not the near relation of a Father. This God for ever stands in to all believers in Christ Jesus.

4. We plead only "for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past." Here is no self-righteous plea; as, "I have not been so bad as some others; though I have done some things amiss, yet I have done some things good; I have been constant at my church, and regular at the Sacraments, &c. Lord, remember these things, and on these accounts have mercy upon me." No; as such pleas are most hateful to God, for they dishonour the Son of his love, and set at naught his atoning blood which was spilt for sin; so they are abhorred also by every believer in Him. Therefore, for Christ's sake alone, we pray our Father, "Have mercy upon us; forgive us that is past."

5. Consider the blessings prayed for, namely, mercy and forgiveness. Mercy implies misery, and forgiveness, guilt. Sin hath brought both upon us. The faithful are sensible of this. A sense of guilt on the conscience makes them miserable; therefore they cry to God to take it away. Nor can they be easy with barely repeating this prayer; nor truly happy till the Lord answers them and takes it away, and fills their conscience with peace in believing. A frown from an indulgent father creates sorrow in the breast of a loving child; he cannot be in ease and comfort till the father's loving smile is again bestowed. So it is with the loving

children of God. And therefore they pray, "Grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please Thee in newness of life." Sensible that this is their constant duty, yet they know the power of living thus cometh from God; therefore they seek it from his grace. But what is the end they have in view in serving and pleasing God in newness of life? Is it to merit his favour, to render themselves the objects of his love, and to entitle themselves to his kingdom? No; these ends are quite subversive of their faith in God, "who, to the praise and glory of his grace," according to the great love wherewith He loved us, "hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6). And such views lead from the glory of the everlasting favour of God, "who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. i. 9). Besides, this were to set up our serving and pleasing God, in opposition to our hope of eternal life through the free promise of a faithful God: "in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Tit. i. 2). Therefore, newness of life springs from new covenant grace, received out of the fulness of Jesus, who is "the new and living way." Serving and pleasing God in newness of life is to the most glorious ends, even "to the honour and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord." For we are delivered from the law as a covenant of works whereby to obtain God's favour and a

title to his kingdom; but we are called to serve in newness of spirit, from faith in Jesus, with love to God, through the grace of the Spirit, "and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. vii. 6). Not as under the curse of the law, the fear of wrath, and dreading the terrors of hell, striving to placate Divine justice, and to appease an angry God. No, blessed be God! for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, hath made us free indeed from all this. It is a glorious liberty He hath called us to. A most sweet and pleasant service we are enjoined, even to live by faith on the Son of God, to live as becometh the Sons of God, to walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us" (Eph. v. 2), and "to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our lives" (Luke i. 74, 75). And thus God is honoured and glorified, when, "by the grace of God, his children have their conversation in the world" (2 Cor. i. 12).

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Ministerial Absolution pronounced.

"ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto Him; have mercy upon you; pardon you and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Every sentence is full of the abundant grace, the pardoning mercy, and the forgiving love of our heavenly Father, springing from his everlasting loving mind, manifested in his beloved Son, and revealed and promised in his Gospel of glad tidings to sinners. What true Christian but will from his heart join his sincere Amen to each sentence? We all daily stand in need of mercy to pardon, mercy to deliver us from our sins, mercy to confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and mercy to bring us to everlasting life. All is of God's great mercy, from first to last. Therefore the faithful are "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21). Methinks one is here led to view the Lord of love commanding the high priest of old to bless his people with this triplet of evangelical blessings (Num. vi. 23, &c.): "The Lord bless thee and keep thee"—Here is the abiding, preserving love of God the Father. "The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee."—Here is the comfort of the bright-shining grace of God the Son, the Sun of righteousness. "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."—Here is the sweet communion of God the Holy Ghost, in giving peace to the believing soul.

Then shall the priest say, for the comfort of drooping minds, and for reviving the dejected spirits of poor sinners, "Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to Him: 'Come unto Me, all who travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh

you'" (Matt. xi. 28). Turning from sin and turning to Christ is essential to the nature of true repentance. Coming to Christ is believing on Him, and looking to Him to be saved from the guilt and power of sin, yea, and also from the very being of sin. But until this is effected in glory, He refreshes our fainting spirits on earth with rest in Him, strengthening food from Him, reviving cordials of love by his word and Spirit: so He enables us to hold on, hold out, and to "endure to the end, seeing Him who is invisible."

Again: He declares, "God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). Sinners, estimate the love of God the Father to you, by the gift He gave for you. True, this aggravates your sins; this deeply affects your unbelieving minds; this sinks you in low abasement. It is fit it should. But say, have you sinned against a Father's love? Still there is the love of a Father's heart to pardon and save you. Here is a sweet word supplied in this passage of Scripture by our venerable compilers, which is not in our English translation, "To the end that all that believe," &c. It is as though all had said, Verily, the very end for which God gave his Son to a world of sinners, is answered upon thee, even upon thee, whosoever thou art, who believest in Jesus. Though thou art a sinner in thyself, yet thou shalt never perish—God's end is answered upon thee—thou shalt assuredly have everlasting life. Most comfortable hope!

Again we are called upon: "Hear also what Saint Paul saith: 'This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'" (1 Tim. i. 15). The trembling, self-abased sinner is prone to be looking within himself to find some worth or worthiness whereon to fix his hopes of eternal life; but here is a faithful saying, firm as the rock of ages, and durable as eternity itself, for him to receive: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." But the humbled soul is ready to start back, and utter this objection—"But I am not worthy to receive it." True, but know, O soul, the worthiness lies in the saying, not in the receiver. It is worthy of all men, yet no man is worthy of it. If it was never to be received but by those who were worthy of it, verily, the end of Jesus' coming would be frustrated. Was Paul worthy of it? No, says he, "I am the chief of sinners;" "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." If an inspired apostle was not worthy of this saying, who is? Yet he accounted both the saying, and Jesus the substance of the saying, worthy to be received by him. It is worthy to be received by the worst and vilest of sinners in all ages also. They who receive it have this infallible evidence—"They come to Christ;" for they are partakers of like precious faith with St. Paul and the rest of the apostles. They have also the same blessed object to look to, and live upon, even Jesus, the Saviour of sinners.

"Hear also what Saint John saith: 'If

any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins'" (1 John ii. 1, 2).

Here is the only sovereign remedy for sinners and against all the sad effects of sin; but not one encouraging word to continue in sin. Though the sight of sin dejects, and though the sense of sin distresses us, yet belief in our propitiation, advocate, and pleader, Jesus, before the throne, forbids despair, encourages hope, and animates joy. Therefore the minister exhorts—

"Lift up your hearts."

Pore not over yourselves; let not your hearts be cast down; sorrow not as sinners, without hope; but lift up your hearts unto Jesus. Look to his propitiation for sin, and to Him, the advocate for sinners.

We reply, "We lift them up unto the Lord."

Faith in the Lord's word causes hearts to ascend up whither the Lord is.

"*Priest.* Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

"*People.* It is meet and right so to do."

That we, God-provoking sinners, are out of hell, is matter for praise; that we are in the land of hope, calls for our thanksgiving; but that we really have in our hearts "Jesus, the hope of glory, the hope of salvation," oh, this calls for the loudest praises from us; therefore the minister declares to the Lord—

"It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all

places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God." Oh, the solemn sight! Oh, the joyful harmony, when a company of sinners saved by grace are prostrate before the Lord, and uniting in heart and voice in this sweet ascription! In this, earth conspires with heaven to laud and magnify the glorious riches of redeeming grace and dying love.

"Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name." Why "therefore"? Truly, for one and the same reason. For all the heavenly host, with the Church triumphant above, praise and magnify the glorious name, Divine attributes, and harmonious perfections of Jehovah, for his salvation in Christ Jesus. So the Church militant on earth, having seen the glory of God shining in the person of Jesus, unite in the same ascriptions of glory and acclamations of joy. For we perishing sinners, once lost, are now brought home by the love of God the Father, through the grace of God the Saviour, by the power of God the Sanctifier. This causes joy in the presence of the holy angels, and joy amongst all the redeemed on earth as well as in heaven. For we have "beheld by faith the glory of Jesus, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). He hath saved us by the fulness of his grace, according to the truth of Jehovah. "This the angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. i. 12). They partake of its joy, and join us to give glory for it.

"Evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory." These words are borrowed from inspiration. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne," says Isaiah (vi. 1). What Lord? Not God, essentially considered. No man hath thus seen God at any time. His essence is not to be seen by mortal eye. But, like Stephen, he saw Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, in whom dwells "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). An infallible expositor explains this (John xii. 41): "These things spake Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of Him," even Jesus. And the cry around his throne was, Holy, holy, holy. Holy Father, Holy Son, Holy Ghost; "Thou one Lord of hosts." For Thou lovest and savest sinners, according to thine own holiness, to the glory of thine own name and thine own grace. Thy life in flesh was a life of unspotted holiness. All the doctrines of thy Gospel display thy holiness, and lead thy redeemed ones to love holiness and to follow after holiness. "Heaven and earth are full of thy glory." Jesus showed forth the glory of his "eternal power and Godhead" in the miracles He wrought on earth. He still manifests his glory in heaven, in his miracles of grace on the hearts of sinners. We have felt and experienced this; and now we join to give Him the glory of it, with all the redeemed ones in heaven and earth. We, before his throne of grace on earth; they, before his throne of glory in heaven; saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God

Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. iv. 8).

"Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High." To Thee, who once emptiedst thyself to thy glory, madest thyself of no reputation, and becamest obedient to the death of the cross; but art now, "O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, most high in the glory of God the Father." To Thee be all the glory of our salvation. Amen, so be it, for ever.

But when Isaiah had seen this vision, struck with a sense of his own state as a sinner, he cries out, "Woe is me; I am undone; for I am a man unclean: mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." So Peter fell down before Jesus, with, "I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke v. 8). And St. John, when he beheld the glory of Jesus, "fell at his feet as dead" (Rev. i. 17). Thus we, after our hearts have been aspiring towards heaven, considering the Lord's grace and glory, praising the Lord with our tongues, return to a view of ourselves, and to an acknowledgment of our utter unworthiness to the Lord. Oh that we may be favoured as Isaiah was! May a live coal from the altar of Jesus' love touch our hearts with, "Lo, thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." May Jesus speak to our hearts as He did to St. John, "Fear not"! Why are our fears forbidden? Is it because we are not sinners, and have no sin in us? No; we should above all fear this lie. But, "Behold, I, your Saviour, your salvation, who was dead, am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and of death." Here

is the life of our faith; this the death of our fears; this the joy of our souls. For our Jesus hath said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19).

CHAPTER XXV.

The Faithful join in Renouncing all Plea in Works and all Trust in Themselves.

"We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies." It is as natural to us all to trust in our own righteousness, as it is to sin against God; yea, so to trust in it, as to expect to be saved for our own good works and obedience. This leaven of pride is hid in our fallen nature. How came we to renounce this? It is an act of special grace to see it, and be delivered from it. It is part of our salvation to be saved from trusting to what we are in ourselves, to what we can do to save ourselves, and to commend ourselves entirely to the free favour and undeserved grace of God. For it is of the very essence of our Christian faith to believe (contrary to our proud notions) that the Lord hath loved us freely, justified us fully, and saved us wholly, by his great mercy, through the blood and righteousness of his dear Son. As this belief is according to the Scriptures, so it

inspires trust in Christ alone. Love of heart and devotion of life to Him proceed from it. The view of Christ's righteousness at once begets confidence in it, and deadens the sinner's trust in his own. Hence he becomes of the "true circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus only, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). Such see the mercy of the Master of the feast, in clothing their naked souls with his robe of righteousness, and in feeding their hungry souls with his body and blood. They come to his Table to give Him the glory of these his manifold and great mercies to them. But those cannot be thankful for Christ's righteousness who trust in an imaginary righteousness of their own. They cannot join with our Church in truth. If they repeat these words, the trust of their hearts gives their tongues the lie.

But it is too common for those to be most confident of their state who have the least cause for it. The humble, self-abased believer in Christ, seeing so much in himself, he abhors himself, and judges himself unworthy to come to the Lord's Table; while the self-righteous Pharisee is a stranger to any doubts and fears, because he is blinded to his own state as a sinner, by an imaginary goodness and righteousness he thinks himself possessed of. Hence he is confident of his access to God and acceptance with God, thinking he has some goodness to recommend himself to the favour of God. Most precious is the word of the Lord. There is not a frame of spirit we are in danger of

falling into, nor a hope we can indulge in our hearts, which is contrary to the grace and truth of the Gospel, and injurious to our souls, but what our Lord hath censured and condemned in his word. See the picture of the Pharisee and the publican, drawn by Him who perfectly knows what is in the heart of man (Luke xviii.).

Behold the self-righteous Pharisee, with his look of confidence towards heaven; hear his proud yet affectedly humble boast, "'God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men'—a lost sinner in myself. I have some goodness of my own to plead before Thee; some righteousness of my own to trust in and to recommend myself to Thee; I am not as other men, not upon a level with the common herd of sinners, in point of acceptance with Thee and of justification in thy sight; 'nor even as this publican. I fast twice in the week;'—I have been guilty of no outward gross sin; I have prepared myself for thy Table; now I am come to do my duty—to satisfy my conscience in performing this further good work of receiving the Holy Sacrament, in order to maintain a good opinion of myself, to keep up thy favour towards me, and to entitle me to salvation." Here is a whited sepulchre, fair without, foul within!

View, as the greatest contrast, the humble, self-abased publican; see him "standing afar off," conscious that he is not worthy in himself to draw nigh to a holy God; convinced that he has nothing in himself, nor has done anything,

for which he deserves God's favour; not daring "to lift up his eyes to heaven;"—but looking into the dreadful corruption and depravity of his own desperately wicked and deceitful heart; poring over the ruins and misery of his fallen nature; seeing swarms of lusts and corruptions within, and innumerable transgressions outwardly in his life; so that, like David, "his iniquities have taken such hold of him, that he is not able to look up;"—therefore, sensible that he is condemned by the righteous law of God, and exposed to the severe justice of God, and that he is not able to fulfil the former, nor to ward off the latter—behold, he smites his labouring, sin-accused breast! conscience is cut off from every hope and every plea in himself; he unburdens his sin-distressed mind, and breathes forth the ardent cry of his sorrowful heart, "'God be merciful to me a sinner,'—a sinner, who has nothing in himself to plead for pardon from Thee, or justification by Thee—a sinner, who, for everything found in him and done by him, Thou mightest justly condemn him. Lord, I flee from myself to Thee; from all hope, all trust in myself, to that free mercy and sovereign grace which is in Thee, and by which 'the ungodly are freely justified.' God, be merciful! Lord, be propitious! Lord, receive me!"

This is a suitable frame of spirit in which to approach a throne of grace, and to come to the Table of the Lord, at all times. Nor has the most holy saint on earth a greater right to the mercy of God, nor a better plea in and from himself than this publican had; for, "the

Scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Gal. iii. 22). "The whole world is become guilty before God." Therefore, "every mouth is stopped" (Rom. iii. 19). We have no plea of righteousness in and of ourselves; those who think otherwise are wiser even than our Lord.

Now hear the judgment of the Friend of sinners upon these two opposite characters: "I tell you"—I, who shall judge all flesh—assure you "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other." Hear the reason: "For every one who exalteth himself shall be abased; and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted." "Every one who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 5). "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (Jas. iv. 6). "He filleth the hungry with good things; but the rich (such as are increased in goods and have need of nothing) he sendeth empty away."

Now consider the end and design of our Lord in these familiar images: "Jesus spake this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous." Pray mind what is here condemned—trusting that we are righteous in ourselves. This is very natural to us all. 1. Because of our partial views of the perfect and righteous law of God. 2. From comparing our outward conduct with that of others. And 3. Through the pride of our hearts. Hence we think we are righteous, and trust in ourselves as being so. But our Lord spake this very parable to condemn all this; yea, to discourage such a thought from being ever indulged in our

minds. Whenever it is, that moment we fall under his censure in this parable. For a righteous sinner is a contradiction in terms. If we are righteous, we are no longer sinners. If sinners, we are not righteous. Even inspired apostles do not declare they were righteous, but sinners in themselves. For, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). But if we think we are righteous, then such a false conceit of ourselves will instantly be attended with bold presumption towards God, and with a proud and censorious spirit towards our brethren and fellow-sinners. We shall "despise others." And it will also set us above an humble trust in the blood of Christ shed for sinners, and an humble submission to his righteousness, wrought out for the justification of sinners; and therefore we shall be very unfit guests for the Lord's Supper, which is a feast of love and grace for sinners.

"We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table." We here confess, instead of feasting as guests we do not deserve to be even treated as dogs. That soul which looks on itself as a dog, will prize a crumb from Jesus the Master's Table. "But," saith our Lord, "it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Still faith will reply, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Though we are not children of God by nature, but "children of wrath, even as others;" though sin has cut off all plea of worthiness in

ourselves; yet, looking by faith to God's precious promises in Christ Jesus to undeserving sinners, we are encouraged to take and feed upon the bread of life. To this we are freely invited. God denies us nothing, when, like Abraham, we plead, "I am dust and ashes" (Gen. xviii. 27). Jesus is pleased with humble faith. He honours it. He feeds and comforts the subjects of it, because it honours Him. It puts a glory upon his word and work. It empties the soul. It causes it to hunger after Him, and to plead with Him.

"For Thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy." What same Lord? Even He who appeared to our first parents after their fall into sin and misery, with love in his heart, and with a free and gracious promise of mercy on his tongue. The same Lord who speaks to us sinners in the Word, "Behold ye, my Beloved, in whom my soul delighteth" (Isa. xlii. 1). "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Matt. xvii. 5). We have beheld by faith, we have heard the sweet voice of the Son of God speaking, as never man spake, to our hearts. He hath invited us to his Table. We are come to plead the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, and to obtain thy mercy, O God our Father, to the comfort of our souls. For, "Thou art the same Lord over all, rich in mercy to all who call upon thee" (Rom. x. 12).

"Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be

made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us."

Like as the bread and wine are received into us, incorporated and become one with us, in a natural way, so we pray that the flesh and blood of Christ may be received into our hearts, by faith, after an heavenly and spiritual manner. Here is the mystery of Godliness. Our bodies are naturally sinful; our souls are polluted with guilt. But, as our Church sweetly expresses it, in the Communion Collect for Christmas-day, "Christ was made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his mother; and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin." So we expect cleansing by his blessed body and precious blood from all sin and pollution, both of body and soul. Thus we are made perfect as pertaining to our consciences, so as to have no more sense of sin to our guilt and condemnation. Thus we live in a holy, pardoned state, ever dwelling in Christ by faith, and Christ in us by his Spirit. Oh may "the very God of peace sanctify us wholly; that our spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless (in the everlasting union of the Son of God) unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23).

[*Then follows the Prayer of Consecration.*]

Observe, our Church doth not deem it an act as though by some certain word spoken, or action done, by the priest; the natural elements of the bread and wine were transubstantiated,

and changed into the very substance of the body and blood of Christ: no; but, as before we receive our natural food it is the reasonable duty and constant practice of every Christian to look up to God, and beg his blessing upon it; so, in this spiritual feast of our souls, the bread and wine are "sanctified by the word of God and prayer." Jesus our God hath commanded these elements to be set apart for this holy use, "to continue a perpetual memory of his precious death, until his coming again." He set us an example herein, for He blessed the bread before He broke it. This was the apostolic practice. The cup of blessing is blessed, and the bread which is broken is thus "sanctified," or set apart (1 Cor. x. 16). But, believing that the bread and wine still retain their natural state, we pray—

"Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech Thee; and grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine [creatures still], according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood," &c.

"Do this in remembrance of Me," saith our Lord. It is the joy of believing hearts to remember Thee, our Saviour. O Lord Jesus Christ, do Thou remember us, now Thou art in thy kingdom.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Act of Receiving the Lord's Supper.

After the minister hath received the Communion himself, he proceeds to deliver it to the people, kneeling. Those who were favoured with our Lord's bodily presence were indulged to sit with Him. Now Jesus is gone into his kingdom, we "come and worship, bow down, and kneel before Him, the Lord our Maker" (Ps. xcv. 6).

The minister pronounceth these words to each communicant:—

"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.

"The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful."

The Lord help us to dwell in sweet meditation upon these precious words, and to draw some comfort from them. Here is, first, a declaration:—

"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for *thee*." Here a poor sinner may be ready to ask, By what authority doth the minister thus particularly declare this of *me?*

On what ground may I venture to believe that the body and blood of Jesus were given for my soul in particular? The answer is very plain and easy: *All* the objects of the Father's love, and of his Son's redemption, are made in due time the subjects of his Spirit's grace and influence. *All* for whom the Lord Jesus gave his body and blood to be sacrificed and shed, to them He gives repentance unto life when they turn from sin, and faith to turn to Him. Thou, O soul, hast publicly professed to have received these, therefore the minister speaks to *thee*. These words are not pronounced indiscriminately to any one, much less to every one, without respect to the profession they make of faith in Jesus, repentance towards God, charity towards our neighbour, and an intention "to lead a new life, following the commandments of God," &c. But every one who comes to the Lord's Table in our Church does first make this solemn profession. Therefore, in the judgment of charity, founded upon the reason of the thing, this ministerial declaration is pronounced. So sure as thou hast faith in thy heart in the life and death of Jesus for sinners, verily his body was given for *thee*, and his blood was shed for *thee*. Thus is the minister fully justified in this declaration. He cannot see the heart. If men profess to be what they are not, they may deceive ministers, but not God.

For these graces of faith, repentance, love, and holiness are the fruits of the Spirit; we partake of them by a new birth into Christ and union to Him through faith. Our being

new-born into Christ, and believing on Him, is in consequence of Christ's loving us and giving himself to redeem and save us. If Jesus had no love to thee, O soul, thou wouldst never have had one grain of real faith in Him, hope in Him, desire of salvation by Him, nor affection of heart towards Him; nor would thy heart ever have felt the least degree of godly sorrow for sin, grief at having offended Him, concern of soul for want of love to Him, nor sense of uneasiness for being unlike Him; neither wouldst thou have any desire of fellowship with Him, nor concern about living at a distance from Him, nor dread of eternal separation from the Lord of life and glory. Desires after communion and fellowship with Jesus by faith are the results of his love to us and grace in us; they evidence knowledge of Him, views of Him, and delight in Him. And that our sins and corruptions do cause sorrow and distress of soul to us, this is still a further evidence of a heart alive to Jesus, and panting after the enjoyment of Him. Therefore, by the Christian's sorrow, as well as his joys, is he known to be peculiarly beloved of Christ; because both the one and the other spring from faith in Him. And thus our state is manifested, and our conversion evidenced, by the faith of our heart in Jesus. In looking after various marks and evidences of our interest in Christ, "faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and demonstrable evidence of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1), is too often overlooked, and then, no marvel if souls are distressed. For

faith draws all its hope from the word of Christ, all its strength from the fulness of Christ, and all its assurance from the promises which are in Christ; and by faith the soul cleaves to, loves, lives upon, and glorifies the Son of God. We can fix upon no object besides Christ, to derive a comfortable assurance of our own interest in his love and salvation. For the Father's love is manifested in Him. The Spirit's witness is enjoyed in the heart through the faith of Him.

All genuine marks and evidences centre in and flow from this one truth—our vital union to Christ by faith. Our conversion is evidenced by our coming to Christ; that is, receiving Him by faith, or believing on Him. That "Christ dwells in our hearts by faith;" that "Christ is in us, the hope of glory;" that "Christ is made precious to us by faith;" that we "feed upon Him in our hearts by faith;" these are sure marks of his love to us and of our interest in Him. Hence St. Paul exhorts, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) So that the proof that we are in the faith is, that Christ is in us by faith. And thus saith St. John, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John v. 20). So that we know that we are in Christ Jesus and have eternal life, because we have

an understanding heart to know Christ and believe on Him. Thus the Spirit glorifies Christ in our hearts, and bears witness of Him to our consciences. So that we can say with the Church, "My beloved is mine, and I am his" (Cant. ii. 16); and with St. Paul, "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me." Hence "the life we live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). Oh that Christ, the Sun of righteousness, were more looked to for his enlivening rays of comfort, and more lived upon for the Divine joy of assurance!

This is an excellent passage in the homily of our Church on the Sacrament: "Always holding fast, and cleaving by faith to, the Rock [Christ], whence we may suck the sweetness of everlasting salvation. Thus the faithful see, hear, and know the favourable mercies of God sealed, the satisfaction by Christ towards us confirmed, and the remission of sin established. Here they may feel wrought the tranquillity of conscience, the increase of faith, the strengthening of hope, the large spreading abroad of brotherly kindness, with many other sundry graces of God, the taste whereof they cannot attain to who be drowned in the deep, dirty lake of blindness and ignorance. From the which (O beloved) wash yourselves in the living waters of God's word, whence you may perceive and know both the spiritual food of this costly Supper, and the happy trustings and effects that, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, the same doth bring with it. Now it followeth to

have, with this knowledge, a sure and constant faith, not only that the death of Christ is available for the redemption of all the world, for the remission of sins, and reconciliation with God the Father; but also, that He hath made upon his cross a full and sufficient sacrifice for thee, a perfect cleansing of thy sins; so that thou acknowledgest no other Saviour, Redeemer, Mediator, Advocate, Intercessor, but Christ only; and that thou mayest say with the apostle, 'that He loved thee, and gave himself for thee.' For this is to stick fast in Christ's promise, made in his institution [of his Supper], to make Christ thine own, and to apply his merits unto thyself." Oh, may the Lord the Spirit enable us so to do! We should beware of such who deny the heartfelt comforts of faith; the seeing, hearing, knowing, tasting, and feeling the love of Jesus to one's own soul. For all such are strangers to the power of godliness, and inexperienced in the comforts of Christianity. Let us consider—

2. The precious prayer used for us in these words, "Preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." Lord, what a miracle of rich grace, what a mercy of everlasting love, is here hoped for! This crazy, infirm body of mine, which is now crawling upon the earth, the seat of many pains and disorders, and subject to death and dissolution, and must shortly be food for worms; yet wilt Thou, O my Saviour, Lord Jesus Christ, "change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto thy glorious body"? Oh animating hope! And this tried, tempted,

and often distressed soul of mine, once dead in trespasses and sins, still liable to be defiled by sin and harassed by Satan, wilt Thou preserve and bring safe to the eternal enjoyment of thyself, in thine own kingdom and glory? And shall my "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of Thee, O my Lord Jesus Christ"? Oh, for a heart full of love, praise, and devotion to Thee, my dear redeeming God! It is to thy unspeakable love we owe these lively hopes. Methinks, when one views the Son of God, our brother in the flesh, we cannot but think we have acted an infinitely more base and ungrateful part to Him than ever the sons of the patriarch did to their brother Joseph; yet, like him, when raised to the head of Pharaoh's house, our Jesus, who "is exalted at the right hand of God," thus speaks to us, in the like affectionate language of Joseph to his unkind brethren: "'Come near to Me, I am your brother, therefore be not grieved;' sorrow not as men without hope, though your sins sold Me to the Jews, and nailed Me to the accursed cross, and pierced Me with the cruel spear, 'for God did send Me before you to preserve life' (Gen. xlv. 5). You were sanctified by God, my Father; preserved in Me, your anointed Saviour; and you are called now to know Me; therefore, 'mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied' (Jude 2). 'As my Father hath given Me power over all flesh, that I should give eternal life to as many as He hath given Me' (John xvii. 2), therefore, 'whoso eateth my

flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day' (John vi. 54). I have given you to have eternal life by faith in Me now, ye shall assuredly enjoy the fruition of it in glory with Me hereafter." Thus speaks our loving Lord, in the affection of his heart, to all his beloved brethren. Oh that while our eyes flow with tears of love, and our hearts are filled with sorrow for our sins, our souls might be comforted with the joys of faith, and the hope of everlasting life, from the words of Jesus! For, consider—

3. The injunction, "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee: Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee." Put forth thy hand, and take these pledges of thy Lord's love; eat and drink these instituted signs of his most blessed body which was given for thee, and of his most precious blood which was shed for thee. Exercise the faith of thy heart, the hope of thy mind, and the love of thy soul upon Him, who died on the cross for thy sins, procured pardon for them by his blood, and hath obtained eternal redemption for thy soul. Remember all this. Let thy Lord have all the praise and all the glory of his love and of thy salvation. Oh, when one considers the guilt, the curse, the misery, and the wrath of God, which were first brought upon us by the putting forth of the hands of our first parents to take and eat the fruit forbidden by the Lord, one is struck with terror and dread. When we reflect how often we have put forth our hands, and taken and fed

upon such things which are forbidden by our Lord, and might have proved the eternal death and destruction of our precious souls, verily we must sink into shame and sorrow. Well might the Holy Ghost put this cutting interrogation to us: "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death" (Rom. vi. 21). Truly, we now find it so. We have put forth our hands to sow sin; we now reap shame, and justly deserve to receive our wages, eternal death. But oh, what a loving friend is Jesus to us, even to us, his enemies! for, "while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us; he hath reconciled us to God by his death." And how sweetly may we reason with the apostle, "Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10). And doth He thus command us: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (Rom. xii. 20). Oh, how effectually hath the Son of God thus acted towards us! To our hungry souls He gives his blessed body for food. To our thirsting spirits He gives his precious blood for drink. With the heavenly fire of Divine love He melts down the enmity of our hearts, dissolves their natural hardness into the heavenly disposition of love. We hate our former base and injurious conduct towards our God. We are ashamed of ourselves for it. We love our compassionate Lord who acted most lovingly towards us. Consider—

4. The exhortation, "Feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." O soul!

thou who readest, and he who writeth these words, how justly might Jesus have said of each of us, what the haughty king of Israel said to Micaiah, "Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace" (1 Kings xxii. 27). Verily, our mouths must have been stopped, for we are all become guilty before God, "the Scripture hath concluded us all under sin" (Gal. iii. 22); and therefore to be eternally shut up in the prison of hell is our just desert. But, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" For, instead of feeding upon the anguish of our guilty spirits in black despair here, and being doomed with devils and damned spirits to gnaw our tongues for pain in the kingdom of hell hereafter, lo, we are called to feed upon the Son of God, who is the Bread of Life which came down from heaven, and to drink of the living water of salvation! Verily, therefore, the very stones would cry out against us if we did not give Him thanks. Faith works by love, and creates a thankful heart, while unbelief shuts the mouth to praise. Well, therefore, do the faithful pray, in the words of our Church, "O Lord, open Thou our lips, and our mouth shall show forth thy praise." Well doth the minister exhort, "Feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." As faith receives Jesus into the heart, so faith feeds upon and digests the wonderful love and rich grace of our once crucified

Saviour and redeeming God. Faith feeds upon our risen, exalted, and ever-living Emanuel, in the preciousness of his person, the fulness of his grace, the perfection of his atonement and righteousness, and the glory of his finished salvation for us. And oh, in the lively exercise of faith, how doth the sweet incense of praise and thanksgiving arise in our hearts, and ascend from our tongues to Him "who hath loved us, and hath redeemed us to God by his own blood"! Well mayest thou, O soul, join in that sweet song of praise, entitled, "A joyful thanksgiving of the faithful for the mercies of God" (Isa. xii.): "And in that day," that Gospel day, when mercy, grace, peace, and pardon are multiplied by Christ Jesus, then "thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore, with joy shall we draw water out of the well of salvation." Thus faith is, as it were, like a bucket, which draws the water of consolation and joy from the original fountain of God the Father's everlasting love, streaming in all the fulness of grace, which is in God the Son, Jesus Christ, and communicated through the word and influence of God the Holy Spirit to the hearts of the faithful. Oh, this is an everflowing, overflowing, inexhaustible fountain of joy, and a never-failing spring of praise! Therefore, from the experience of this (ver.

4), "in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for He hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." Oh, what a rapture of ecstatic joy is this! Behold—praise—declare—make mention—sing—cry out—shout! What a rich profusion of words are here! And all rise out of the fulness of a grateful heart, to celebrate this glorious truth, that our God, Jesus, is become—What? A Saviour to make salvation probable? to make salvation possible? to be the cause of salvation, and to leave us to perform the conditions to entitle us to salvation? Infinitely more: for "behold, God is my salvation." He is not the part of it, but the whole of it, even the substance, the thing itself—salvation itself. "I will trust, and not be afraid; He is my song," says the faithful, joyful, praising soul; therefore I will sing of the wonders of his love, and ascribe the whole and sole glory of salvation to Him only. For "He is in the midst of me; He dwelleth in my heart by faith." I enjoy a hope full of immortality. Then, as taught by our Lord, we again, in his words call upon his name, and say, "Our Father," &c.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Free-will Offering of the Sacrifice of Praise, and the Self-dedication of the Faithful to their Lord.

"O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving"—

The Lord's Supper is a feast of love to us, and it is a sacrifice from us to our God; but not a sacrifice to make atonement for our sins, or to entitle us to the favour of God. The Lord forbid that we ever entertain such a thought! It is dishonourable to the blood and righteousness of the Son of God. But the Sacrament is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to Jesus, who hath "redeemed us to God by his blood," justified us before God by his righteousness, and made us kings and priests to God, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. ii. 5). Oh, how precious is the plea of faith! As children, we come to our heavenly Father, and we cast all our duties for acceptance upon our heavenly Father's mercy, and entirely rely upon his fatherly goodness to receive our sacrifice.

"We most humbly beseech Thee to grant, that by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood"—

Still the faithful lean upon their Beloved.

Their faith fixes wholly on his merits and death. All their plea is, for his sake only. And what will the loving Father withhold from those who thus plead the blood of his beloved Son? "He who spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.)

"That we and all thy whole Church"—

This prayer breathes a truly catholic spirit. We wish "grace to all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." "Thy whole Church." All whom Thou, O Jesus, "hast redeemed to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. v. 9). Our prayer is as extensive as our Lord's love. Where we see the image of Christ, we should love for Christ's sake. It shows a miserable, contracted spirit, where love is shut out by difference of outward forms and ceremonies. We may, we ought to, love, as brethren of Christ, though we differ as short-sighted men.

"May obtain remission of our sins"—

But hath not Jesus actually obtained this by his blood? Yes, doubtless. But here we pray that all the redeemed may have the sweet knowledge of this through faith. The sins, even of all little children in Christ, are pardoned "for his name's sake" (1 John ii. 12). But being young in knowledge, little in experience, and weak in the faith of Jesus, they do not assuredly know their interest in Christ; they can scarce believe that their sins are actually pardoned in his blood. Their poor hearts

are in doubt of this. They cannot cry to God in the strength of faith, "Abba, Father;" yet they do really believe there is salvation in Jesus, and in none other; that there is forgiveness of sins in his blood only, and by no other means. So that they have true faith in Jesus. They are "blessed of God: He doth not impute sin unto them." Though they do not know their blessedness, that their sins are forgiven; still they cleave unto Jesus, and are awaiting when the times of refreshing shall "come from the presence of the Lord." Such as these compose a great part of Christ's Church, and surround his Table. Here they are all prayed for. Yea, we pray that all of us may live in the happy sense of Christ's pardoning love; be all witnesses that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins: and so be ever joyful in Him. And we not only pray for pardon of sin, but—

"All other benefits of his death and passion."

Faith looks to, and rejoiceth in, the past transactions of the life and death of Jesus. Hope looks forward, expecting to receive still more and more benefits from Him. Oh, who can number all the glorious benefits which the Redeemer's death and passion hath obtained to us sinners! Reconciliation to God—adoption into his family—justification in his sight—sanctification into his image, pardon, peace, and joy in God—a heaven on earth by faith now—and persevering grace to endure to the end, till we are admitted into his glory hereafter. All, all is given us by free gift of rich grace, from the

love of God the Father, through the merits and death of his beloved Son, by the communication of God the Holy Ghost. Therefore we plead for all in faith.

"Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee"—

This voluntary self-dedication of the faithful proceeds from the faith and love of their hearts. It is agreeable to the sweet reasoning of St. Paul (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20), "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price (oh, most precious, invaluable price!): therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." And in this solemn act, it is as though we were to say, "O Lord, other lords beside Thee have had the dominion over us." We have not renounced the devil and all his wicked works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, but have lived after the course of this present world; our whole hearts have been set upon it and our affections given up entirely to it; its vain pleasures and sensual enjoyments have been the delight of our minds; we have been fulfilling the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; "the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, ruled in our hearts, and we were the children of unbelief and disobedience." But now, Lord Jesus, we believe thy infinitely great love wherewith

Thou hast loved us, and the inestimable precious price Thou hast paid to redeem us; and we find the grace of thy Holy Spirit within us: therefore we would glorify Thee for thy love and salvation; we would now, in heart, affection, and life, be wholly thine, and only thine, We see infinitely greater joys, more substantial pleasures, and sweeter delights in communion and fellowship with thy blessed self, than all the gay scenes of wordly diversion and carnal pleasures can afford us. They are dead to us; and by the enjoyment of thy love, we become dead to them. Accept, most gracious God and Father, accept, most loving God and Redeemer, this reasonable, holy, lively sacrifice of our souls and bodies, which we here offer unto Thee upon the altar of thy love.

Oh never, never did any real Christian repent of this solemn sacrifice. He can never see cause to change his mind concerning his dedication of his whole self to the service and enjoyment of God in Christ. But he does repent for having lived so long in the service of sin and Satan and to the vain pleasures of a sinful world. He still is grieved; he finds himself the subject of desires and dispositions which are contrary to his being wholly devoted to the love, service, and enjoyment of his God Redeemer. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, so that he cannot do the things that he would." But oh, the awful state of those, who, instead of sacrificing their souls and bodies to God, devote them to sin and Satan, and kill their precious time in the vain pleasures and sinful diversions of a

perishing world! What distress awaits such in the hour of death! What anguish of spirit will seize on all who live and die thus, in the day of judgment! O Christian, what a debtor art thou to the Divine grace of thy Lord, which has snatched thee from this danger, and caused thee to act otherwise!

"Humbly beseeching Thee, that all we, who are partakers of this Holy Communion, may be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction"—

The Lord having emptied our souls of the pride of self-righteousness and of our natural love of sin, we now beg to be "filled with all the fulness of God;" even the fulness of his Divine grace and heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus. A taste and relish of Divine love ever causes hunger of soul for more, yea, to be filled full of it. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (saith the apostle), ye will then be coming unto Jesus, "as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious" (1 Pet. ii. 3, 4). But here conviction of humility strikes gracious hearts: Are we worthy? Are we deserving to be filled with God's favour and heavenly grace? What terms and conditions have we fulfilled to entitle us to this? Oh, no; our Church knows no such pleas. But we confess—

"And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto Thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech Thee to accept this our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ

our Lord; by whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto Thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. Amen."

Thus, in this humbled frame of spirit, the faithful commemorate the Lord's love to them, and his salvation of them, at his Table. Thus they present their sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving unto Him. And thus they offer and present their souls and bodies, as a lively sacrifice to his glory and service. Still sensible that their manifold sins render them unworthy to approach the Lord; yet, considering that his institution hath made it their bounden duty, therefore they willingly obey Him, and beseech Him to accept this their duty and service. And can they think of the high honour and inestimable privilege here enjoyed, without some such meditation as this: What am I? A sinful worm of the earth; born in sin, my soul was naturally dead in sin; by nature, a child of wrath; by practice, an enemy to God in my mind by wicked works; living without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world; carelessly going on to fill up the measure of iniquity, and to render myself ripe for eternal destruction. Where am I? In the presence of the Lord; in the sight of his holy angels; joining with his holy saints upon earth, to commemorate the dying love of a once crucified Saviour. How came I here? Son of David, Son of God, Thou knowest. Hath not thy grace interposed between my soul and eternal misery? Didst Thou not call me by thy word,

"Come unto me"? Hath not thy Holy Spirit enlightened my mind to know Thee, the only Saviour; and to know that without thy blood to pardon my sins, thy righteousness to justify my person, and thy Spirit to sanctify my soul, Lord, I must perish? And, Lord, did not thy Holy Spirit, the Comforter, encourage my mind, incline my spirit, yea, and put faith in my heart, to believe that Thou wouldst receive me, even me, a returning sinner to Thee, my Saviour? Wherefore am I come? In obedience to thy command, Lord, to remember Thee; to commemorate thy love in dying for sinners; and to glorify Thee for becoming salvation to sinners; and to pray Thee, that my soul may partake of the comforts of thy love, the peace of thy Spirit, and the joys of thy salvation, at thy Table on earth, as the earnest and pledge of eternal glory in heaven.

And now I am come, Lord, do not "weigh my merits." I disclaim all merit in myself; I have none to plead; I have not deserved the least favour from Thee; I have no claim to any grace at thy hands; all is freely given; all is richly bestowed. Instead, therefore, of "weighing my merits," forgive, Lord, my demerits, pardon my offences; if, Lord, Thou art extreme to mark what is amiss, even in this, "my bounden duty and service," there is enough to condemn me. For Thou hast taught me, "after I have done all, I am but an unprofitable servant." But in Thee, O Jesus, there is all fulness of grace for pardon, and perfection of righteousness for acceptance in God's sight. It

is Thou who takest away the iniquity of our holy things by thy much incense. It is in Thee, our Beloved, we are perfectly accepted. It is in thy righteousness we are complete, and are justified, and have a title to glory. Therefore, by Christ we come to God the Father; and with Him, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all the honour of grace to sinners, and all the glory of salvation for sinners, be unto Thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. Amen.

Oh that our hearts might ascend to our Lord, while we consider that sweet ascription of glory to Him, which includes the service of the faithful at the Lord's Table:—

"Glory be to God on high." Thus begins the joyful anthem with which "the multitude of the heavenly host" ushered in the birth of the Son of God in human flesh (Luke ii. 14). The rich, free, sovereign, everlasting love and grace of God descends from heaven to earth. The glory of his wisdom, his justice, his righteousness, and his truth, yea, the glory of every attribute and perfection of Jehovah, shine bright in the person of Jesus. And when his grace takes possession of sinners' hearts on earth, then it causes glory to ascend to God on high. Grace bestowed on fallen men raises the shouts of glory to God from the Church militant on earth, and the Church triumphant in glory is incessantly employed in celebrating the glory of God in the salvation of Jesus throughout eternity. Says the beloved disciple, "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and

tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes: " not a sin within them, not a spot upon them, but all are for ever washed away in the blood of the Lamb; and they are presented in the glorious white robe of the Lamb's righteousness, "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24): thus we have more than angelical purity. "And palms in their hands"—the trophies of victory over every enemy, sin, death, and hell. While exceeding great joy fills their hearts, and an eternal crown of glory adorns their heads, they break forth with "a loud voice" in this triumphant song, "saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." And all the angels, though they never tasted the redeeming grace and dying love of the Son of God, yet being the subjects of electing love and confirming grace, therefore they " stood round about the throne," and joined the redeemed sons of men, "saying, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. vii. 9-12). Our Jesus is the God both of angels and saints. He is their confirming, He is our redeeming, God.

So then, O Christian, grace brings sinners to the feet of Jesus! Grace brings Christ into the heart of sinners on earth; and oh, what glory doth this bring to God in heaven, O my soul, admire, adore, and rejoice! Thou art here before the Lord's Table, celebrating his praises with all the heavenly host of angels and of the

spirits of just men made perfect, in the mansions above.

All are uniting in one and the same blessed employ. Thus, when "God, who in the beginning, caused light to shine out of darkness, shines into our hearts, then we enjoy the knowledge of the glory of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ." Then we may truly be said to be "come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling" (Heb. xii. 22–24). Then we unite in heart and voice, "Glory be to God on high!"

"And on earth peace."—Jesus is "the Prince of peace" (Isa. ix. 6). He hath brought peace from the God of heaven to us sinful rebels on earth. "He hath made peace for us through the blood of the cross" (Col. i. 20). And before He expired upon it, He left us this precious legacy in his word, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John xiv. 27). And through believing in his name, the God of hope fills us with joy and peace. For "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). And we hence delight to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14).

"Good will towards men."—Herein is love;

not that we loved God, but that He loved us. Herein is grace; not that we had a good will to God, but his good will is first towards us. And who shall declare the wonders which God's good will towards us hath wrought for us? His word declares it; Chistians experience it, and they come to the Lord's Table to celebrate it. All the means of grace we partake of, and all the hopes of glory we entertain, are all from the good will of God towards us. That we have a good will to use the one, and to be delighted with the prospect of the other, this also cometh of the good will of God. "For it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13). Thou, O Christian, who knowest thyself, who art acquainted with the corrupt nature of thine own will, that it is naturally prone only to will that which is evil, averse to what is good—thou canst boast no more of thy own free-will to that which is spiritually good. The belief of God's good will towards thee is entertained with joy, and celebrated with humility. The faithful members of our Church who come to the Lord's Table do most heartily acquiesce in judgment with our Church in her Thirty-nine Articles. They not only assent to this form of sound words, but are acquainted also with the sense and meaning of them in their own heart. In particular, Art. X., "Of Free-will:"—

"The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God: Wherefore we

have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing [that is, first disposing] us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

O God, am I willing to be saved by thy grace, and to receive the kingdom of heaven as the free gift of thy good pleasure? Have I a will to embrace thy beloved Son Jesus Christ? to believe in his name as the only Saviour of sinners? to submit to his righteousness, by which alone sinners are justified? to rely on his blood, through which alone sinners are pardoned? Have I a will to live by faith on the Son of God, to walk in love, and to devote my life in serving and obeying thy will, O my God? Have I a will to hate sin, repent of sin, turn from sin; to love, delight in, and follow after holiness? O Lord, I this day prostrate myself before Thee, and, in thy sacred presence, and in the presence of angels and men, would give the whole glory of all this to Thee. By thy grace, O God, I am what I am; it is all because thy good will is towards me. O my God, my will is naturally contrary to all this; but the day of thy power, O glorious Emanuel, is come upon me; therefore, with "thy people, I offer Thee free-will offerings, with an holy worship" (Ps. cx. 3).

"We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for thy great glory, O Lord God."—Even Thou, Holy Spirit, who dwellest in us, and walkest in us, and comfortest us in the truth of the

Saviour's love, and art his blessed witness in our hearts.

"Heavenly King."—Jesus, Thou King of saints, we give thanks to Thee for thy great glory, who reignest for us above, and reignest in us by faith and love.

"God the Father Almighty."—Thou, O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Almighty God and Father in Him, "the Father of all our mercies, and the God of all our comforts," we give thanks to Thee for thy great glory, for that Thou "hast loved us, and hast given thy Son for us;" and, in the faith and knowledge of Him, hast "given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace (2 Thess. ii. 16). "Thus in all things, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped." And thus the praises of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity are proclaimed from gracious hearts. So it was in the Church of old: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name," Jehovah, the covenant God, the Trinity of Persons in the unity of Essence, we "give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake" (Ps. cxv. 1). Thou hast showed mercy to the miserable, therefore our praises ascend to the merciful one. We are the objects relieved by Thee; and thy mercy is bestowed on us for truth's sake; for the sake of the truth of covenant engagements, according to the truth of everlasting love, agreeable to the promise of truth, and the oath of truth, ratified and confirmed by the blood of Jesus, who is emphatically "the Truth" (John xiv. 17). Therefore we call upon Him—

"O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us."—The Spirit of inspiration styles the saints of God "the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. i. 1). As "they are in Him who is the truth," so they confess, and call upon, and worship Him in truth, as the Lord, the Lord God, Jesus, the only begotten of the Father; "God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect Man;" who, as a lamb without spot of sin, was once sacrificed to redeem a lost world; who is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" and who ever lives to save all who cry to Him for mercy. Those who do not believe that Jesus is both Lord and God cannot worship with us, cannot communicate with us, cannot call upon Jesus with us, nor hope for mercy from Him; and yet without the mercy of Jesus, our Lord and our God, they must remain miserable sinners, and perish everlastingly. "But to them that believe, Christ is precious," as our God-man and Mediator. So we believe. We know we constantly stand in need of his mercy, and therefore we cry again and again to Him for it.

"Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us."—As, verily we believe thy righteous Father did lay all our iniquities upon Thee; as truly as Thou didst "bear all our sins in thine own body upon the

tree;" as surely as Thou, O holy Lamb of God, hast "put away our sins by the sacrifice of thyself;" removing its punishment from us, and its filth and its guilt from before the sight of God, thy righteous Father—so take away the guilt of sin from our consciences; so pardon sin in our hearts; so save us from its power, that it reign not in us, nor have dominion over us in our lives; yea, so have mercy upon us as to deliver us, in thine own time, way, and manner, from the very being of sin in us, which is thine enemy and our grief.

"Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer."—On the belief of thy sacrifice, O Lamb of God, for our sins, our prayer is founded. As we plead thine atonement for mercy, so, for an answer to our prayers, hast Thou not said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son"? Yea, Lord, and as knowing how slow of heart we are to believe thy love, and how backward to ask thy great blessing and richest comforts, therefore, to quicken and encourage us, Thou hast again repeated, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John xiv. 14). Thanks to Thee, Lord, for these sweet words of promise. It is enough. Thou hast said, "I will do it." In humble prayer we call, and in humble hope we will wait. We have thy word for the object of our faith and the warrant of our hope. That weeps our souls looking up to Thee, and waiting upon Thee, till Thou shalt accomplish all thy skill in us, and save us to the very uttermost.

"Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us."—Thou, Lord of life and glory, who once wast "crucified between two thieves, the one on the right hand and the other on the left:" and when Thou wast hanging on the cross didst answer that prayer from the lips of a dying malefactor, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into thy kingdom;" O hear us, Lord, remember us, now Thou art in thy kingdom. We also stand in need of the very same mercy as the thief whom Thou savedst in the last hour. For we also are malefactors, miserable evil-doers, as he was. There is no way for us to be saved, and to enter into thy kingdom, O Jesus, but by thy free, unmerited mercy. Therefore, Lord, have mercy upon us, who are "looking for the mercy of Thee unto eternal life" (Jude 21).

"For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord."—We believe in Thee as the only essentially holy Lord God of thy people. Therefore, Thou, O Jesus, art worthy of all our trust and confidence. We adore Thee, as our holy God: we believe in Thee, as the Holy One of God, the only holy Man, Christ Jesus; we rejoice in Thee as our God-man, Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour. Thus the prophecy of the Lord is fulfilled in us. We stay ourselves "upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth" (Isa. x. 20). "For in that day (this precious Gospel-day) shall the deaf hear the words of the book." We, who naturally were like "the deaf adder, that stopped her ear, and heard not the sweet voice of the charmer, Jesus, though He charmed

never so wisely" in his word, yet now find "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. xix. 10). Therefore we say with Jeremiah (xv. 16), "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts." "And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity." We sinners were born blind, our minds were once darkened to our own misery and the glories of Emanuel; but the "light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 4, 6). We confess "his eternal power and Godhead," who is the Saviour of men. "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. xxix. 18, 19). Who are the meek? Who are the poor among men? Even we, all of us, are "miserable sinners." We are all in debt—insolvent bankrupts, we have nothing that we can call our own but sin, and this is our curse and our shame; we are so poor that we are in want of everything to make us holy and happy. Adam's transgression hath so impoverished us, that we are quite naked. But, though we are so miserable, wretched, and poor, yet we are abominably proud also. For we are prone to reject "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who became poor, that we, through his poverty might be made rich." Therefore, we are not naturally meek; but being taught to

see ourseleves in the light of God's word, our hearts are humbled, our pride and self-sufficiency are brought down, we become poor in our own eyes, our lofty looks and strong reasonings are cast down, "our high thoughts of ourselves, which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, are brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." So, indeed, our hearts become meek. We willingly receive the revelation of Jesus; we gladly sit at his feet; we rejoice to hear the words of his lips; we bow to his cross, submit to his righteousness, and confess ourselves wholly and solely indebted to Him for salvation; we commemorate his love at his Table with a thankful heart; possessing the unsearchable riches of Christ, we crown Him with the whole and sole glory of saving us. Thus we "joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the Holy One of Israel; we rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh." As our knowledge of Him groweth, and our faith in Him increaseth, so our joy of Him, and rejoicing in Him, aboundeth more and more unto the perfect day. Therefore we say from our very hearts—

"Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen."—"For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality; who art one God, one Lord, not one person only, but three persons in one substance." Thus, scripturally, all the

faithful of our Church believe and confess, in the Collect for the Feast of Trinity ;* and, in the Collect for Trinity Sunday, we thus address the Lord: "Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity: we beseech Thee, that Thou wouldst keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen."

Here we may observe, 1st, That "God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 13). 2nd, "The faith of God's elect receives and acknowledges the truth which is according to Godliness" (Tit. i. 1). 3rd, Love "rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Cor. xiii. 6). 4th, Humility confesses from whom the truth cometh ; it is given us by the inspiration of the Spirit in the word. 5th, That the truth doth not naturally spring up in our minds, but that grace is *given* us from God, whereby we believe and confess the truth. 6th, That our hope is fixed upon God, to keep

* I gladly embrace this method of confessing myself greatly indebted to the Rev. Mr. Jones, rector of Pluckley, in Kent, for his excel ent treatise on the Trinity. I heartily bless God t iat I ever read that best of all human compositions I have met with on this important subject. It has been a blessed means of establishing my mind in that Scripture doctrine. The learned and judicious author has fully proved the truth of this sacred mystery; not by nice, abstracted, metaphysical reasoning, but by that which is of all others the most convincing and establishing to Christians, namely, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things, explaining Scripture by Scripture.

us steadfast in this our most holy faith. And lastly, That we are exposed to many enemies of this truth, and therefore we pray the Lord to defend us against them. All this enters into the very essence of this prayer. Therefore, a rejection of this truth of "the glory of the eternal Trinity" is a sad evidence of being left to the pride of fallen nature, and to "walk in the vanity of our minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is naturally in us, because of the blindness of our hearts" (Eph. iv. 17, 18), and also that all such persons are destitute of the graces of faith, love, and humility.

But we "have not so learned Christ, if so be we have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus;" for we see the glory of the holy, blessed Trinity manifested and displayed to sinners in the grace and salvation of Christ. And therefore, with believing Simeon, embracing Jesus in the arms of our faith, well may each of the faithful also joyfully say, "Blessed be God, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation:" I have seen Jesus by faith, as evidently set before me this day, in the instituted emblems of his human body, once crucified for us, and of his precious blood, once shed for us. I have fed on Him by faith, and would now and ever rejoice in Him, as the glory of all God's people, and as the only glory of my soul. God forbid I should ever glory in sin, which is my greatest shame: God forbid I should ever glory in myself, which is the

greatest pride: God forbid I should ever glory in mine own righteousness, which is the greatest ignorance: "God forbid I should glory in anything, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh, may I ever glory in Him who is my greatest glory!

In these lively views of Thee, O Jesus, by faith, may I now depart from thy Table. And, when the approaching messenger, Death, shall come, to bid nature dissolve, and my soul depart out of this vale of tears, then may I find thy victories, O my redeeming God, the joy and triumph of my departing soul. May I then say, "Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Thus, O Lord, "let all those who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord (Jesus) be magnified. But I am poor and needy: yet the Lord thinketh upon me: Thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God" (Ps. xl. 16, 17). "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 20).

Thus, upon the whole, we see the essential difference there is between learning Christianity as a scholar, so as to have the form of godliness, and receiving it as a poor, needy, guilty, miserable sinner. For such, and only such, it was intended. By such only it is embraced. From such only, Jesus, the God of our salvation, gets glory. Thus, the religion of Jesus appears to be the religion of sinners; the ordinances were appointed for sinners, instituted by the Friend

of sinners, are suited to the state of sinners. The means of grace beget and increase love to holiness and the hopes of glory, in the hearts of sinners; yea, the whole design of the religion of the Bible is to cement, unite, and keep the soul close to Jesus the Saviour of sinners, by faith now, till it is brought to the enjoyment of Him in glory; according to the meaning of the word "religion," which signifies, to bind again. Thus the soul, once fallen away from, becomes bound again to, its proper object of rest and only centre of happiness, God in Christ. Therefore, agreeably to this faith, the minister dismisseth the congregation of the faithful with this apostolic blessing:—

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen."

Thus endeth the Office for the administration of the Lord's Supper in the Church of England.

Practical and Experimental Observations upon "The Peace of God," &c.

THIS Divine benediction, which concludes the solemn service of our Church, is an epitome of the Gospel of peace. It includes all the comfort which a Christian can enjoy in this life till his soul returns to God. Therefore let us make some practical and experimental observations on it. Oh that, through the blessing of the Eternal Spirit, they may be made profitable to the faith of the Christian's heart and the regulating the conduct of his life!

CHAPTER I.

The Nature of this Blessing.

It is justly styled "The peace of God." It is the offspring of heaven. God the Father is the author of it, hence called "the God of peace" (Rom. xv. 33). God the Son is the procurer of it; "the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him" (Isa. liii. 5); "He hath made peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. i. 20). And God the Holy Ghost, in consequence of this, bestows this peace upon the believing sons of men; for "the fruit of the Spirit is peace" (Gal. v. 22). Thus "these three who bear record in heaven bear witness in earth also. They agree in one." One essence, one truth, even to grant this blessing of peace to the rebellious sons of fallen Adam. Hence they held a "counsel of peace" (Zech. vi. 13). They entered into the covenant of peace. Thus saith Jehovah, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee" (Isa. liv. 10). This "covenant is ordered in all things, and sure" (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). Images taken from the strongest things in nature are alluded to, to represent the firmness and stability of it. It is established upon everlasting kindness; supported by everlasting faithfulness; and shall be fulfilled by everlasting

truth, according to the everlasting mercy of the everlasting Jehovah, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is declared as to one person, in the singular number—"thee." The objects of God's everlasting kindness and mercy are collectively considered as making up but one body, the Church, of which Christ is given to be the Head (Eph. i. 22). They are all viewed as one in Him. Hence, "Jesus was made a surety" of this covenant (Heb. vii. 22). Glory be to his loving heart and precious name! He saw thee and me, O soul, at this distant period of time; He foresaw all the evils sin would bring upon us; He knew all the miseries to which sin would expose us, and all the wants to which it would reduce us: therefore, He engaged in the everlasting covenant to become our surety; to be made like unto us in all things, sin excepted; to be Emanuel, God with us, God in human flesh; to fulfil all the terms and conditions of this covenant for us which law demanded and justice required; to pay all our debts to God; to satisfy his strict justice, which we had offended; to fulfil his righteous law, which we had violated; to atone for sins which must have destroyed us; to open the kingdom of heaven, which sin had shut against us; and thus to remove every hindrance between God and our souls, and to make way for free communication from God's heart to us, that peace and love might flow from our heavenly Father into our hearts and minds, through Jesus our blessed surety. Thus, this covenant, which was confirmed of God in Christ, nothing

could disannul, that it should make the promise of life and salvation by Jesus of none effect (Gal. iii. 17). Hence the prophets testified of Jesus, of the covenant of grace, and the counsel of peace, which He engaged to ratify and fulfil on our behalf. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," saith the Lord; therefore, "hearken unto Me" (Isa. xlvi. 10, 12). For He "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. i. 11.) And when Jesus appeared in flesh, the heavenly host ushered in his glorious birth with this joyful anthem, "Peace on earth." God and man are reconciled in one Christ. This flows from the good will of God towards men, and this brings "glory to God in the highest" (Luke ii. 14). All is from the covenant of grace, and the counsel of peace. The apostles with one accord unite in saying, "Lord, of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed (to be our peace-maker), both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together." To what end? Even "to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts iv. 27, 28). Though all the powers of earth and hell had combined, verily, they could never have crucified Jesus if He had not permitted it. But He knew our peace was to be made by his sufferings and death; therefore He submitted. And "being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, he was taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 23).

Oh marvellous mystery! The very wicked hands which took and crucified the Son of God fulfil the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God! Amazing to think of! The malice of Satan, and the hatred of men against Jesus, are the very means of our peace being made by his blood. Unparalleled love! the Son of God is made a curse, suffers Divine wrath, groans and dies in exquisite torture, to reconcile offending man—to make peace with an offended God. Yes; his expiring breath proclaims the mighty deed is done—the almighty work effected. "It is finished," said the Prince of peace, when He bowed his precious head, and gave up the ghost. What is finished? Verily, all the toils of his holy life, in obedience to his Father's holy law—all the sufferings of his painful and accursed death, as the satisfaction to his Father's justice, were all finished: thereby the work of our salvation is perfectly wrought out, and everlastingly finished, and thus is our peace made with God. For, in the human nature of Jesus, "the mercy and truth of Jehovah met together; his righteousness and peace kissed each other" (Ps. lxxxv. 10.) All the attributes of God harmonise. Mercy is established; truth fulfilled; the law magnified and made honourable; justice fully satisfied; righteousness rejoiceth that peace is made; and the God of love freely bestows his blessing of peace upon rebellious men. For "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath;

that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. vi. 17, 18). This peace is not a mere speculative truth, to be assented to only in the judgment; but, glory to Jesus! it is enjoyed in the heart.

CHAPTER II.

How this Peace is brought into the heart and mind.

It is very natural for us all, through ignorance of our Bibles, and being strangers to our own hearts, to talk of making our peace with God. Nothing is more commonly heard from the lips of men than this. But, poor souls, they know not what they say nor whereof they affirm. Such language is the result of ignorance, pride, and unbelief. 1st. Of *ignorance* of the holy law of God, against which we have all sinned; of the strict justice of God, which we have all provoked; of those attributes and perfections of God which are set in array against us; of "the carnal mind" which is in us, which is "enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii. 7). 2nd. Of *pride*, because such language proceeds from the haughtiness of our hearts, and proves that strong reasonings are not brought down, and high thoughts, which,

exalt themselves against God, are not yet brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. x. 5). 3rd. Of *unbelief*, for such vain pretentions are directly repugnant to the truth of God's word, and discover a total rejection of the Gospel of Christ, which is "glad tidings" to poor sinners, that Christ has already made peace by the blood of his cross. Hence it is called "the Gospel of peace" (Eph. vi. 15); for it "preacheth peace by Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all" (Acts x. 36). So that, as to any sinner's attempt to make his peace with God, it is vain, it is utterly impossible. Not the holiest saint on earth could effect this; not the highest archangel in heaven could accomplish this for man. Indeed, men who talk most of making their peace with God, attempt the least towards it. They put off the thoughts of it to an hour of sickness or the day of death. Though they pretend to do it, they can never effect it. For what poor sinner is enabled to make an atonement to God for his sins; to satisfy his justice, which we have offended: to fulfil his holy law, which we have violated; to change our hearts, which are desperately wicked; to renew our own souls, which are utterly sinful; and to turn the whole disposition of our nature from the love of sin to delight in God? Say, O ye sinful sons of fallen Adam, who among you is equal to this work? Yet all this is absolutely necessary to make your peace with God; and nothing short of all this can procure it. But, alas! we must all lie down in despair, die in enmity against God, and in open

war with heaven, if it be left for us to make our peace with God. All created nature must let this work alone for ever. But, glory to the everlasting love of God our Father, glory to the rich grace of God his Son, our Saviour, the work is done, everlastingly and completely done. It was the wisdom of Heaven to plan it; it was the work of Jesus on earth to finish it. Heaven rings with acclamations of joy on account of it; and saints on earth triumph in the enjoyment of this peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

For it is brought into our hearts and minds. How? Glory to the Holy Spirit, by his almighty grace. It comes to us through "the communion of the Holy Ghost." It is, as our Church says of love, "an excellent gift poured into our hearts by the Holy Ghost." But how doth He effect this? By immediate inspiration, without any means? No. We pray, in the words of our Church, that "by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we may perfectly love God, and worthily magnify his holy name." Now, here it is plainly implied, that without inspiration, or breathing into our hearts the love of God by the Holy Spirit, we cannot love God. Yet this is prayed for and expected, "through Christ our Lord." Therefore, knowledge of, and trust in, Christ are here implied; even to know and trust that Christ hath atoned for sin by his blood, justified sinners before God by his righteousness, that God looks on sinners in Him, loves them in Him, is fully reconciled to them, and at perfect peace with

them, in Him. But how do we thus know Christ? Is this by immediate inspiration? No, verily; to expect this, we have no warrant; to pretend to this is rank enthusiasm. Are we to expect the Spirit will teach us to know Christ by any immediate secret whispers 'and inward suggestions, without the means of the word? No, truly; for this were to set aside his revealed word. which he has caused to be written, wherein He testifies of Jesus. This is to run into the errors of Quakerism, to supersede all outward means, all revealed truths, and instituted ordinances. To reject the written word is downright infidelity. To expect the Spirit to teach the knowledge of Jesus, without the word, comes from a spirit of delusion. What is this but to impeach the wisdom of God, in giving us an outward revelation of Jesus, which He supersedes as useless and unnecessary, if He inwardly teaches us to know Christ by immediate inspiration? But yet, says the Heavenly instructed soul, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints" (Ps. lxxxv. 8). How do any hear? By any articulate word spoken? How doth God speak peace? Is it by an audible voice? Fancy may suggest this; a warm imagination may believe this; and the spirit of delusion may propagate this. But there is neither scripture nor reason to support this, nor doth the nature of the thing require it. To expect it is to tempt the Lord. The Lord speaks peace in and by his word. To hear it is to receive the truth into the

understanding. To believe it is to welcome it into the heart with the love of it; not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God. But is faith given us by immediate inspiration? Not so, neither. "For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). Doth the Spirit breathe the word of God by immediate inspiration, without faith? No. "The wicked, who are void of a lively faith, are not the subjects of the peace of God." "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. lvii. 21). Who are the wicked but those who do not please God? —"But without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. x. 6). And so far from unbelievers being at peace with God, we are assured, "he who believeth not is condemned already; he who believeth not the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 18, 36).

So then, here is Jesus, the Object, who has procured peace. Here is the word of God, which is the means of our knowing Christ. Here is faith, which is the medium by which the word is received into our minds, and the instrument of receiving Christ into our hearts. And here is the Holy Spirit, who is the agent by whom the eyes of our understanding are enlightened, by means of the word, to know our calling, which is to enjoy the peace of God in Jesus Christ. Thus He brings this peace into our hearts and minds, through faith in Jesus, according to the word of God. For the Spirit bears witness to Jesus in the word. The word is the seed sown in the heart. The Spirit, like

the sun in nature, quickens what is sown there. By the word, the Spirit discovers the abominable vileness of man's fallen nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and that hereby man is become an enemy to God. By the word the Spirit opens our eyes to see our nakedness, convinceth us of our helplessness and inability to do anything to make our own peace with God, affects our minds with our misery without the peace of God, and convinceth us of our danger, that we must have eternally perished in our sins under the wrath of God, had not Jesus made peace by his blood. The Spirit sets before us, in the word, the abundant fulness of the grace of Jesus, the perfection of his atonement for sin, the glory of his everlasting righteousness for the justification of sinners, and that these are accepted of God, and imputed to sinners, that hereby our peace with God is perfectly made, and everlastingly finished. And therefore, being justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ, by faith we have peace with God (Rom. v. 1), peace in our own hearts and minds. Thus, by the precious word of the Lord, the Holy Spirit silenceth our proud reasonings, answers all our carnal objections, stops our cavilling mouths, brings our high thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ, stills the clamours of our consciences, by assuring us "there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1), and comforts our hearts with this Divine testimony, "Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in

Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 39). And hence we throw down our arms, and cease our hostilities against God, being conquered by his love. Here then is a peace established, firm as a rock, durable as the pillars of heaven. Here is a peace enjoyed, of which God the Father is the author, God the Son the procurer, and God the holy Ghost the inspirer. Well, therefore, do we use that sweet custom in our Church, after the portion of the Gospel of peace is named by the minister, in proclaiming, "Glory be to Thee, O Lord." As if we were to say that there is peace with Thee, O Lord, for us miserable sinners; that this is preached to us in the Gospel by Jesus Christ; that this is brought into our hearts and minds by thy Spirit; the glory of all this is due to Thee, O Lord; therefore we join in ascribing it wholly unto Thee.

But how different is this scriptural peace from that which carnal, unregenerate men fancy they possess! Alas! they cry to themselves, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." For behold, while "they say, Peace and safety, sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. v. 3). Their ease of mind is a false security; their peace of conscience is a fatal delusion; for they are at peace with their sins; conscience is asleep, unaffected by the law which worketh wrath. They are ignorant of the Gospel of peace, strangers to the Prince of peace; they resist the Holy Ghost, the Inspirer of peace, and are at war against the God of peace. How long? Even till the

Lord quickens them by his grace here, or awakens them by the voice of the archangel and the trump of God hereafter.

And how vastly different also is this solid scriptural peace of God from that which many profess to experience, which is only airy and visionary! A mere human fancy, a phantom of the mind, created by a warm imagination, and supported by the power of nature's passions. As the tide of these flows in, their peace is enjoyed; as these ebb, their peace subsides. Now they feel peace, but they cannot tell why. Anon they have lost it, but they cannot tell how. Their frames and feelings are substituted in the place of faith; imagination and fancy supply the room of the word of God; their human passions are attended to, instead of the Spirit of truth; and the grand object of their minds for peace is a good opinion of themselves, instead of a scriptural knowledge of, and steady belief in, the "Lamb of God who has taken away the sin of the world," and who has made peace with God by the blood of his cross. Thus, where the passions hold the reins, and fancy is the guide, men often drive on for a season in the road of self-righteousness, imagining themselves possessed of the peace of God. But when the strength of their passions tires and abates, their frames and feelings fluctuate and change, and their warm imaginations forsake them, then their peace is lost. Thus it appears, that what sprang up in nature's summer expires in nature's winter; what was the effect of nature's heated passions, dies

away in the coldness of nature's feelings. Thus effects prove the cause from whence they sprang. Hence it is common for those who judge more by carnal reason, and according to appearances, than by righteous judgment founded upon the word of God, to deem such temporary professors saints of God, and to conclude that they are fallen from grace, from a justified state, which they were never brought into, and that they have lost what they never possessed, even the peace of God; for that preserves the children of God from finally falling away, because it keeps their "hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Let us examine, then, whether our peace springs from the belief of God's word, and faith in God's Son.

CHAPTER III.

That the peace of God passeth all understanding.

This is an excellent observation of Doctor Secker, late Archbishop of Canterbury, in a sermon on Philippians, iv. 7. Of the peace of God, he says, "It is that sense of being in friendship with God, that feeling of comfort and joy flowing from Him, which passeth all understanding, exceeds the conceptions of those who have not experienced it, and will exceed hereafter the present conception of those who have." The archbishop uses three sweet words here: sense—

feeling—experience. Had they not come from the pen of his grace, they might have fallen under the censure of enthusiasm. But who ever deemed his grace an enthusiast? Yet he useth these words. By them is most plainly implied, that a real Christian is one who has spiritual sense, spiritual feeling, and spiritual experience. I shall have occasion frequently to use these words; I have the authority of the archbishop for this. Not that I would flee for shelter to his grace's authority, fearing the charge of enthusiasm. Alas! what is all flesh, but grass? What is all the glory of man, but as the flower of grass? But "the word of God liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23, 24). In that I would glory. And in this, sense, feeling, and experience is preached to us by the Gospel. Thereby we taste "that the Lord is gracious" (1 Pet. ii. 3), find that we are not "past feeling" (Eph. iv. 19), but we experience "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. v. 5). These are all scriptural expressions; therefore the use of them is justified by an infinitely greater authority than the most dignified mortal on earth, even by the Spirit of wisdom and truth. But will this screen one from the charge of enthusiasm? By no means. The more we speak of enjoying the life, spirit, and power of the Gospel, the more enthusiastical we are deemed. Such is the glory of the present day. Enthusiasm is the common cant word which is applied to Divine truths which men do not understand, and to spiritual blessings which they never experienced.

But such happiness our Church teaches her members to expect. In that sweet benediction, at the Visitation of the Sick, the minister thus scripturally says, "The Almighty Lord, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in Him, make thee to know and feel that there is none other name under heaven in whom and through whom thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here observe—1. It is the work of the Lord the Spirit, to make any sinner know and feel the health and salvation of Jesus. 2. That our souls have maladies as well as our bodies, which must be healed, or we shall die eternally. 3. That health and salvation for any sinner are to be found in and from the Lord Jesus only. 4. That no soul can die comfortably, without knowing and feeling this truth, and receiving health and salvation from Jesus. 5. That it is the delight and glory of our heavenly Physician to bestow this health and salvation upon all sensible sinners, all sin-distressed souls. For, 6. He is the Almighty Lord, a most strong Tower to all who put their trust in Him. Thus our Church holds forth the Lord as a most kind Physician, a most precious Refuge, a most blessed Asylum, a most impregnable Defence to all who flee to Him, and put their trust in Him; and that they have the sweet knowledge, feeling, and experience of this too. For, says our Church in her excellent seventeenth Article, "Godly persons do feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ," &c.

Men, brethren, and fathers, seeing these things are so, why then should not Christians know and feel the comforts of Christ's grace, in the peace of God, through the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, in the day of health as well as in the hour of sickness? Why should they not be happy in receiving the health and salvation of Jesus in the day of life, as well as at the hour of death? Sure I am, if we cannot die comfortably without this, we cannot live happily destitute of it. To the glory of my dear Lord's precious name and matchless grace, and for the encouragement of my fellow-sinners, I am bold in glorifying of the health and salvation of Jesus, and that He makes me to know and feel his love in my heart.

> Enthusiastic this? then all are weak
> But rank enthusiasts . . . . .

Fearless of the indignant frown, regardless of the contemptuous sneer, unconcerned at the pointed satire, and unawed by the dread of nickname from the carnal world, why should not Christians rejoice to glory in their inestimable privileges, enjoyed in fellowship with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ? Do the men of this world glory in their shame, and shall we be ashamed of our greatest glory? We know mere natural men do not know or feel these things. We know they cannot desire to enjoy them. The reason is plain. They never knew or felt the evil of sin in their hearts, or the burden of sin upon their consciences; therefore they are not suitably

affected at the consequences of sin. Hence the blessings and privileges of the Gospel of the grace of God seem just as unsuitable to them as a prescription from a physician would be to a man who is in sound health. Such as are whole in their own sight see no need of Jesus, the Physician of souls. It is quite natural to them to speak evil of things of his Spirit and of his kingdom, which they know not of; they are foolishness to them; for, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

Mr. Burkitt very judiciously observes here, "There are some things of God which a natural man may know; but the things of the Spirit of God, as truths purely evangelical, these he receiveth not, neither in his understanding nor will. A person of the most exquisite natural accomplishments, and one who has improved his reason to the highest pitch, cannot behold evangelical mysteries in their proper light, or embrace them in their verity and beauty, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit." Now this peace of God is one of the things of the Spirit of God. But the natural man has no "sense of being in friendship with God; no feeling of comfort and joy flowing from Him; no experience of the peace of God; it exceeds his conception," as the Archbishop phrases it. But who will take this character of a natural man to himself? The man of fine parts and acquired abilities thinks it cannot

belong to him; the minister, who thinks himself sent to teach others, has no suspicion but that he is a spiritual man; the mere nominal Christian, because he conforms to the outward duties of religion, believes he is not a natural man; and the outwardly profane think nothing at all of the matter. Who, then, is this natural man the apostle speaks of? By these two marks he is easily distinguished: 1st, He does not know himself; he is blind to his own ignorance of spiritual things; he is a stranger to his own heart and state; he knows neither the spirituality of the law nor the grace of the Gospel. But the spiritual man judgeth all things: he can see he was once a natural man; but the natural man, whilst in his state of fallen nature, and unrenewed by the grace of God and unenlightened by the Spirit of God, cannot see his own state, and will not own himself to be a natural man; he doth not even know himself. But, 2nd, He is known to others. Only try him as to sense, feeling, and experience of this blessing of the peace of God; you will soon discover he has no conception of it; he will "count it foolishness;" yea, he will speak evil of the things which he knows nothing of; they go beyond his understanding. Cast a pearl, one of the truths of the Gospel, one of the blessings of Christianity, before such, and instead of receiving it, they will turn upon you, and rend you, saith our Lord. Tell them, "that all who believe in Jesus are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39); that to such there is "no condemnation" (Rom. viii. 1);

that you are a living witness of this truth: that "being justified by faith, you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and that God the Spirit hath inspired into you a sweet sense of being in friendship with God, a feeling of comfort and joy flowing from God; yea, that you now experience this peace in your own conscience. What would natural men say to this? Though it is the language of Scripture, of our Church, and of the late Archbishop, yet they do not understand it. It is a happiness they have no conception of. Therefore, with the same breath they would honour you, and manifest their own state; for they would "cast out your name as evil, for Christ's sake;" and in so doing, prove themselves mere natural men. Your faith they would condemn as romantic, your experience they would brand as enthusiasm, and your person they would dignify with being righteous over much, that too much religion hath turned your brain. Such honour have all God's saints from the men of this world. They "know them not." They account both the faith and experience of a Christian foolishness. The apostle assigns a very plain reason for this: "The things of God a natural man cannot know, because they are spiritually discerned." Says Bishop Beveridge, "I believe it a thousand times easier for a worm, a fly, or any other despicable insect whatsoever, to understand the affairs of men, than for the best of men, in a natural state, to understand the things of God. We must have a spiritual light, before we can understand

spiritual things; of which every natural man being destitute, he can see no comeliness in Christ, why He should be desired; nor any amiableness in religion, why it should be embraced."—*Private Thoughts.*

Thus "the peace of God passeth the understandings" of all mere natural men. Yet this very benediction is constantly pronounced by our ministers at the dismission of the congregation. It contains nothing more than every real Christian doth in common enjoy. And we may safely assert, without breach of charity, that he is not a true Christian who desires not to experience a sense and feeling of the comforts contained in this blessing. For the word of truth declares, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. viii. 9); therefore, he is a stranger to the love of Jesus and to the peace of God. Oh what numbers of such professors are found among us!

But, even as to you, O ye children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, who have the sense of God's friendship in your hearts, who feel the peace of God in your minds, who experience the comfort of it in your consciences, doth not this pass your understanding also? For can you fully explore the amazing heights and the wondrous depths of this blessing? Dwell on it you may, you ought, with rapture; speak of it you may, you ought, with joy—saying with David, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul" (Ps. lxvi. 16). But fully to comprehend, and explicitly to explain, the inward comfort of

heart-felt peace with God, here all reason is nonplussed, conception is at a stand, understanding is perplexed, and all language fails in description. But here faith is all in all. We believe what we cannot fully comprehend; we experience what we cannot fully explain; we rejoice, adore, and praise, for "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and for the happy consequence of it, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." Both the one and the other it is our happiness to know by faith; but it is not our calling perfectly to understand, nor fully to explain.

Yet this much we do know—we are fully assured of it by the infallible word of truth—that the Eternal Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, is at peace with his people. Those who believe this, experience the comfort of it. For "by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. v. 1). The Gospel proclaims this. Christ's ministers preach this. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus for this, and breathes this peace into our hearts. And when rebellious man hears such joyful tidings, and receives such welcome news into his heart, oh, how doth it conquer his stubborn will, subdue the rebellion of his nature, slay the enmity of his spirit, and cause him to cast his weapons of hostility to the ground, and to lift up his eyes to heaven, with, "O God, is there peace for me? Are thy thoughts thoughts of peace towards me? What, me!—such a vile, rebellious wretch as me! O Lord, can it be?" Yes, for Jesus "hath ascended up on high; led captivity cap-

tive; received gifts for men;* yea, even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Ps. lxviii. 18). And He saith, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and (though they were naturally perverse and rebellious children, yet) I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 16, 18). Here, O soul, the Lord speaks in the sovereignty of his grace, and in the fulness of his precious love—"I will; such is my determined favour towards you. You shall—your former rebellions shall not prevent, your present state of unworthiness shall not hinder, you from enjoying the tokens of a tender Father's love to his beloved children—you shall experience the smiles of my face; you shall feel the comforts of my love: you shall enjoy a sense of my peace in your hearts and minds." O thou once rebellious but now love-conquered soul! doth not thy Lord's love surprise thee? Doth not this amazing declaration of peace to thee, who wast naturally afar off, pass, surpass, and go beyond all thy conception, all thy understanding?

But art thou revolving in thy wondering mind, "What! am I to do nothing towards enjoying this peace?" "Yes; stretch forth thine

* I could not pass over this passage without remarking that this Psalm is applied to our Emanuel by an infallible commentator (Eph. iv. 8). The word which the translators have rendered "for men," stands in the margin of our Bibles, as it may be rendered, "in the man:" so that the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit were received in the manhood or human nature of Jesus, as the covenant-head and surety of all his spiritual seed, to be communicated out of his fulness to hem.

hand, take what the Lord freely bestows, for He saith, 'Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me'" (Isa. xxvii. 5). Here is the poor sinner, who was naturally at war against the God of peace. Here is an answer to his inquiring soul after peace, from Jesus, the Prince of peace. But what can we conceive our Lord means by his strength? Doubtless, somewhat we have heard of in his word. What can it be but the strength of his love—his infinite, his everlasting, his almighty love? His love is stronger than death. All the floods of Divine wrath could not quench it. "Nothing shall be able to separate from the love of Christ." Love to us brought Jesus to the death of the cross, to make peace for us; and in spite of all opposition from devils or men, his love will keep us in peace on earth, and bring us to a crown of glory in heaven. For if God be at peace with us, who shall be against us to destroy us? What then is it to take hold of the strength of Jesus' love, but to believe it in our hearts, and to hold it fast in our consciences? "That in Me," saith the Son of God, "ye might have peace" (John xvi. 33). Believe in Me, and be comforted; abide in Me, and be happy. Hence we are exhorted, "Hold fast the form of sound words, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. i. 14). This is an evidence that "we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end (Heb. iii. 14). And to encourage us in this, says our dear

Lord, "Behold, I come quickly (your time and trials are but short in this vale of tears): hold fast (your faith in the love of me), that no man take thy crown" (of rejoicing in me) (Rev. iii. 11).

Thus, as this peace passeth all understanding in the enjoyment, so also in the way in which it is experienced. Even by taking hold of the strength of Jesus' love, believing in the Son of God, and abiding in Him by faith; for He who was the despised man, the suffering Saviour, upon whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, is also the Lord, almighty in strength. He wrought miracles in nature in the days of his flesh. He still works miracles of grace, by his spirit, in the hearts of sinners: so He brings the peace of God into our souls. "All things were made by the Son of God: and without Him was not anything made that was made." Without Him are not any sinners saved, who are saved. Without Him none can enjoy the peace of God here. And by Him all shall be judged and sentenced eternally with, "Come, ye blessed," or, "Go, ye cursed," hereafter. Therefore He saith, "Take hold of my strength, and be at peace with Me." "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace," saith Eliphaz (Job xxii. 21).

When we are acquainted with Jesus, oh then we joyfully cry out, What hath the beloved Son of God done? What hath He wrought for us sinners? He hath saved us from hell. He hath reconciled us to God; He hath made peace with God for us by his blood; He brings this

peace into our hearts by his Spirit; and thus He gives us a foretaste of heaven upon earth. "This, this is my beloved and my friend: He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely" (Cant. v. 16). The more we know of Jesus, the more we long after greater knowledge of Him. St. Paul had long known and lived by faith on the Son of God, yet it seems to be the one desire and prayer of his heart, "That I may know Him" (Phil. iii. 10). For in the knowledge of Jesus, our Prince of peace, "standeth our eternal life" of glory, and our present peace on earth. But all this passeth our understanding fully to conceive of, and perfectly to explain; yet it is the joy of our souls to find and feel the truth of this by faith, in the experience of our hearts. There is a still further mystery and joyful truth in the next words, which we proceed to consider.

CHAPTER IV.

How this Peace of God "keeps our hearts and minds."

This is "through Christ Jesus," saith the apostle (Phil. iv. 7). "In the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ," saith our Church. This is a just comment upon the Divine truth. The Christian's peace is not a phantom of the mind, the effect of imagination, nor the fruits of prolific fancy. But as it pro-

ceeds from the knowledge of God in his word, and is enjoyed by faith, so it produceth effects correspondent to its own nature, and to the good of the subject who is possessed of it. As the knowledge of God in Christ first captivates the human mind, so the peace of God in Christ ever after keeps the heart in the knowledge and love of God. By the knowledge of God, peace is created in the soul; by peace the mind is preserved in knowledge. The peace of God is a blessing bestowed on us, who were once his enemies. This peace ever keeps our minds as friends in the knowledge of God, as our loving, reconciled Father. Hence we have an answer to some objections which may be urged.

1st. How do you know the peace you enjoy is not rather a fancy of the mind, or an illusion of Satan, than from God? We answer, The effects prove its cause. What comes from God leads the heart and mind to God. The peace of God comes from God, therefore that leads the heart and mind to God. This we experience from a sense of being in friendship with God; feeling comfort and joy flowing from God, we find our minds kept in the knowledge and love of Him. But it is objected again, This is walking by sense and feeling, and not by faith. Not so, neither. For, though we may for a season lose our sweet sense and comfortable feeling, yet still we walk by faith. Yea, even when we do enjoy these, our object is still the same; not our sense and feelings, but Christ, who is the life of our souls, as He is revealed in his word, God manifested in Christ,

reconciled to us, and thus known in the heart by faith. So that when we enjoy a sense of peace, and feeling of comfort, we praise our dear Lord for this, for these flow from Him. If we are destitute of this comforting sense and feeling, still He keeps our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of Him. We cannot lose his word, which is the means of our knowing Him; having once tasted his love in the peace of our hearts, He keeps us in the knowledge of Him, "by his power, through faith." So that with David, we say, in the faith of our hearts, "In God's word will I rejoice; in the Lord's word will I comfort me." Thus our "hearts and minds are kept in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ," by the truth of his word, and the grace of his Spirit, through faith. Hence we are led to prize the word of God as precious, and to take heed to our ways, to rule ourselves after his word, lest we grieve the Holy Spirit, the inspirer of peace into our minds. The knowledge and love of God in Christ constrain us to hate sin, which God hath forbidden; and to follow after holiness, which He hath commanded. Thus the peace which we enjoy proves that it comes from God, and from none other. The first cause of any sinner upon earth enjoying peace with God is his thoughts of peace to us. For thus "saith the Lord, I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil" (Jer. xxix. 11). As an effect of this, God brings us to the knowledge of himself. This is declared in the next words,

"Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you" (Jer. xxix. 12). We cannot call upon an unknown God. We know Him by faith, as revealed in his word. We call upon Him as manifested in Christ Jesus. And what is the effect of this calling on the Lord? We are told in the next verse (Jer. xxix. 13), "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." "This is," saith our redeeming God, "ye shall know that in Me is your righteousness" (Isa. xlix. 24); "and that the work of my righteousness is peace; and the effect of my righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. xxxii. 17). From this ye shall have that sense of being in friendship with God, that feeling of comfort and joy flowing from God, which passeth all understanding. This shall certainly be the happy experience of every soul who seeks the Lord with his whole heart. The Lord will bring his people to seek Him, and to search after Him, just as one does after anything one's heart is set upon, and one cannot be happy till we have found it and do really possess it. Thus the Lord had thoughts of peace towards St. Paul, though he was in such daring open war against the Lord, his truth, and his members. The Lord made himself known to him in a wonderful manner. He spoke to him from heaven in an extraordinary way, saying, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." What was the consequence? "Lord," says he, "what wilt Thou have me to do?" Oh, I would

gladly be at peace with Thee, I will now serve Thee with all my heart. And, says the Holy Ghost, "Behold, he prayeth" (Acts ix. 11). He sought with all his heart to enjoy peace from the Lord. He found it. And this peace of God ever after "kept his heart and mind in the love of Christ." "That I may know Jesus; that I may win Christ; that I may be found in Him." This was ever after the language of his heart. Just so it is with every sinner who is naturally born with enmity to God, and lives in rebellion against Him; but when he comes to know the peace of God, as revealed in the word, and manifested in Christ Jesus, then he believes in Him, prays to Him, and loves Him. Again, here is an answer to another question: Doth the Lord keep the heart and mind of any in peace, without the concurrence of their own will, without the actings of their own minds, without any suitable dispositions of their affections towards Him, without conformity of life in obedience to his will? No, this would be contrary to Scripture, reason, and the nature of the thing. I would appeal to the experience of all true Christians, whether they do not find that their hearts and minds are kept in the sense of peace, only while they are stayed upon God? I think no one will dispute or deny this. But we have the more sure word of prophecy to prove this: "Thou, O Jehovah, wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isa. xxvi. 3). Thus the Church of old sung, thus they believed, and thus they experienced.

Trusting in God explains what is meant by staying the mind upon God. Now, here we view the believer exalted to the highest state of honour, while at the same time he is debased to the lowest degree of humility. For the very nature of trusting in God, or the mind being stayed upon God, implies these two things:— 1st. A real conviction that we have nothing in ourselves that we can trust in, or stay our minds upon. Here is our lowest humility. And, 2ndly. That we are warranted and encouraged to trust in and stay our minds upon God. Here is our highest honour.

The mind of the Christian is taught the reality of both these truths by the word and Spirit of God, and thus his mind is kept in peace. But what God is it whom he trusts in, and stays his mind upon? Not an imaginary, absolute being, which his own natural fancy forms to his mind; a being possessed of such and such amiable qualities, attributes, and perfections, which men are pleased to ascribe to Him and compliment Him with. No; all men believe there is a God: few know God. To know there is a God, and to know God, are two distinct things. But the Christian believes his Bible; by means of that he is taught to know God; he believes on God as manifest in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto himself. The light of God has shined into his heart, to give him "the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face, or person, of Jesus Christ." He sees in Jesus all the glorious attributes and perfections of God displayed in their utmost splendour and

glory, while they all harmonize and appear in the most alluring, inviting view to poor sinners. The Christian has an "understanding heart given him to know that the Son of God is come:" "that we might know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." All others but God in Christ are idols; therefore, we are exhorted, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John v. 20, 21). But the true Christian's mind is kept trusting in and stayed upon the Lord Jehovah, the covenant God; "God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," as our Church expresses it in this blessing; the Three-one God, who sustains these office-characters in the covenant of grace—redemption, justification, and salvation of us sinners. All the blessings of God the Father's everlasting love, all the riches of God the Son's everlasting grace, and all the comfort of God the Holy Ghost's everlasting consolations, are treasured up in the fulness of Jesus, to be dispensed to all its members. Thus runs the Divine testimony: "It pleased the Father, that in Jesus (who is the head of his body the Church) should all fulness dwell; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence, as having made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. i. 18—20). Thus runs the Christian's experience: "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John i. 16). Thus runs the Divine charter: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19). Thus runs the

believer's obedience: "We serve the Lord Christ, of whom we shall receive the reward of the inheritance" (Col. iii. 24). Thus declares our blessed Peace-maker: "All things are delivered unto Me of my Father: no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Therefore, saith Jesus, "Come unto Me, ye weary and heavy-laden" sinners (Matt. xi. 28). "Thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help" (Hos. xiii. 9). "Blessed is he who shall not be offended in Me" (Matt. xi. 6). "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me" (John xiv. 11). "Believe in Me" (ver. 1). "Abide in Me" (xv. 4). "These things I have spoken, that in Me ye might have peace" (xvi. 33). Nor has any sinner (and such every man upon earth is) any other object for his faith to fix on, his mind to stay on, or his heart to trust in for peace, but God in Christ, God made manifest in flesh. The Scriptures reveal no other, nor direct to any other. Not to God the Father, considered without the Son, for "the Father is in the Son; and no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me," saith Jesus (John xiv. 6). Not to the Holy Ghost; for, saith Jesus, "The Father sends Him in my name: He shall testify of Me" (John xv. 26); "He shall glorify Me." He is the witness for Jesus in the Word. He is the Comforter of our souls; for, saith our precious

Emanuel, "He shall receive of mine," of my adorable person, of my infinite love, of my rich grace, of my glorious righteousness, of my perfect atonement, of my eternal redemption, of my finished salvation, and of my everlasting kingdom, and "shall show it unto you" (John xvi. 14). Hence, upon Jesus the faith of the heavenly instructed soul fixes its whole hope, stay, and support. What though all such are sensible that they are, day after day, the most poor, the most needy, and the most miserable sinners upon the earth, yet their minds shall be kept in the knowledge and love of God in Christ. Hence they live even the very same life which inspired apostles did, namely "a life of faith on the Son of God, who loved them, and gave himself for them" (Gal. ii. 20). What a precious life is this! What a precious peace is enjoyed by this faith! and what a precious knowledge doth this peace keep the heart and mind in! "Thou, O Jehovah, wilt keep him in perfect peace," or in peace, peace; denoting the abundance of peace which such are kept in who stay their minds upon the Lord. We may know the precise meaning of this phrase, "staying the mind;" it is used in 2 Kings xviii. 21. The explanation of it is easily come at. The children of Israel were then invaded by that powerful and insulting monarch, the king of Assyria. Rabshakeh was sent to revile God's people, and to ridicule their confidence. Says he, "Now behold, thou trustest upon the staff of Egypt," &c. That is, as he would insinuate, under their present distressing cir-

cumstances, when they had neither strength nor power of their own to resist their invaders, they leaned their whole weight of dependence, for the support of their sinking minds, upon king Pharaoh. The word alludes to a weary traveller, who, finding his own strength fail him, leans and trusts upon his staff for support. This is quite similar to our state and circumstances. Are not we invaded by enemies, whom we cannot resist? insulted by foes, against whom we are not able to stand? Are not the world, the flesh, and the devil, in battle array against us, continually warring against the peace of our minds? A far more powerful host than the king of Assyria brought against Israel we have to conflict with; for "we wrestle not (only) with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. vi. 12). A far more subtle enemy than a Rabshakeh attacks our faith, reviles our confidence, and ridicules our hope; even Satan, with all his artful devices. And what can we do? We are not of ourselves sufficient to think, much less to do, anything as of ourselves. And, saith our dear Lord, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5). Therefore, just as a weary traveller, whose strength fails him, leans his weight upon his staff for support, so our weary souls lean and trust upon our beloved Saviour for righteousness and strength. Thus we walk on in the heavenly road without fainting, cheerfully singing with those of old, "In the Lord

[Jehovah Jesus] have I righteousness and strength." For, "in Him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory" (Isa. xlv. 26). Thus our Church defines the household of faith as "leaning only upon the hope of God's heavenly grace" (Fifth Collect after Epiphany). So the Church of old is described as "coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved" (Cant. viii. 5). Having no confidence in the flesh, conscious of weakness and inability to perform the duties of religion, to withstand the temptations of Satan, to escape the snares of the world, to answer the demands of the law, and to hold on and hold out to the end of their Christian race, it is the wisdom of Christians to see both righteousness and strength in their beloved Jesus for them; and it is the glory of their souls daily to repose their trust in Him, and constantly to stay their minds upon Him, for his everlasting righteousness is the clothing of their souls and our title to glory. His almighty strength is our armour, in which we are enabled to "fight the good fight of faith," and to persevere, even till we "lay hold of eternal life." "Therefore," saith St. Paul to his son Timothy, and also to every son of God, "be strong" (not in confidence of your own inherent strength or righteousness, but) "in the grace which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. ii. 1). Ever trust to that; ever stay your minds upon Christ. So David, when he was greatly distressed, "encouraged or strengthened himself in the Lord his God" (1 Sam. xxx. 6). Thus the "peace of God keeps our hearts

and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ," as our only staff of strength, our only stay of comfort.

CHAPTER V.

That it is not only our bounden duty, but our exalted privilege also, at all times and seasons, to trust in the Lord, and stay our minds upon Him for peace.

THE knowledge of the Lord is given us in his Word to this very end. We are not only invited, encouraged, and exhorted, but again and again commanded, even by the Lord himself, to trust in Him; for not only our good is hereby promoted, but also our Lord's Word is honoured, and his name is glorified. And are we assured that the Lord will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon Him? Yes, saith the prophet; and he assigns the reason—"Because he trusteth in the Lord." The trust of the heart makes the Lord a debtor to fulfil his own word of promise. Indeed, seeing what vile and wretched beings we are, doubt and diffidence might well take place, if we were only to look to ourselves, and had no word from the Lord to encourage our confidence in Him. But, glory to his grace, there is no one state of life nor frame of mind we can possibly be in, but we have a word from the Lord, suited to our circumstances, to encourage our trust in Him. Hear the voice of the Spirit: "Trust ye in the

Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isa. xxvi. 4). Oh let your minds ever set a mark upon that precious word, Jehovah! Whenever we see it occur, let us remember it is the name of the self-existent God, even our precious Emanuel, God with us, God for us, God in Christ, God incarnate, God in our nature. This Lord is to be the object of our faith and the trust of our hearts for ever: "He only is our salvation and our glory, the rock of our strength and our refuge." Therefore, we are called upon, "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us" (Ps. lxii. 8).

And David adds Selah, just as we put N.B. for *nota bene:* as much as to say, Mark this well, consider it attentively, spread it before your minds, let it ever dwell on your hearts, that what you are most backward to is of the utmost importance to the peace of your souls —at all times to trust in the Lord! Why? Because God is our refuge. Oh, in times of danger, difficulty, and distress, how happy is the soul who flies for refuge to Jesus, the God of his salvation! How comforting ever to place confidence in Him! What ease doth it give the mind, what refreshment doth it yield to the conscience, to pour out the heart before Him! That is, with a holy familiarity, as to a loving brother or a faithful friend, to lay open all one's burdens, griefs, trials, and distresses to our Lord. Oh, how joyful to remember our merciful High Priest is touched with a feeling of all our infirmities, and sympathises with us in all our

sorrows and sufferings! Such is the love of Jesus; such the blessedness of his members!

Christian, thou hast been at the Table of thy Lord, to commemorate his love in becoming the hope of thy soul and the stay of thy mind. Thou art called, and, as a believer in Jesus thou canst not but desire and delight to glorify thy Lord in thy life. But this can only be done by trusting in the Lord, and staying thy mind upon Him. Consider this under the following particulars:—

1. The sight and view of thyself, as a fallen creature, must be sorely distressing to thy mind.

How many things art thou conscious of being the subject of, which are ever working against the purity and peace of thy soul! Natural men, who are dead in trespasses and sins—if they commit sin, and their conscience is a little alarmed, and reproves them, time, assisted by carnal remedies, soon lulls the conscience asleep again; the sin is forgotten, and the evil is soon effaced from their memory. But thy renewed soul has an abiding sense of the dreadful corruption of thy fallen nature, and of the desperate wickedness of thine own heart. Thou dost see, and therefore wilt say with the apostle, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing;" and must confess, "When I would do good, evil is present with me" (Rom. vii. 21). You feel a war within as well as without. A continual conflict between the old man and the new, the flesh lusting against the spirit, the risings of carnal lusts,

the workings of pride and unbelief from the carnal mind, the rebellion of thy corrupt nature against God's sovereignty, his providence, his truths, and his grace in Christ Jesus. Now, under all this sight, sense, and feeling, what can support thy heart, and keep thy mind from sinking? Verily, nothing but its being stayed upon the Lord; believing his everlasting, unchangeable love; confiding solely in the infinitely perfect righteousness of Jesus for the justification of thy person in the sight of God; relying only on the everlasting atonement which his precious blood hath made for thy sins to God; trusting wholly to the all-sufficient fulness of the grace which is in Jesus, that his strength may be perfect in thy weakness, for the subduing of thy sins and mortifying of thy lusts; staying the mind upon the Lord, as being risen and ascended, in our nature, into heaven, "There sitting in the glory of the Father;" his prevailing intercession at the right hand of God for us; the exceeding great and precious promises, which are in Christ Jesus, yea and amen, to the glory of God, and shall be fulfilled in us; looking for the glory which shall be revealed at the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and shall be enjoyed by us. All these are the revealed truths of God's Word; all flow from the everlasting love of God to us—therefore are the objects of our faith, and are as a staff of strength and a stay of support to our minds. And by staying our minds upon them, we honour our Lord's precious Word, and glorify his rich

grace; we prove ourselves his faithful disciples, bear our testimony to the truth before men, and, therefore, in this way He will comfort us—by keeping our minds in perfect peace, because we trust in Him.

2. We are called to "fight the good fight of faith." This implies enemies without as well as within. Here is the world, with its bewitching snares, flattering smiles, beguiling baits, and threatening frowns; all its honours, riches, and pleasures decked out in the most enchanting dress to allure and captivate. And here is Satan, the god of this world, ever ready to suggest to thy mind, "Cast in thy lot; taste of sensual joys and pleasures, and thou wilt long after more; there is a sufficiency to gratify and delight;" and we are the subjects of a nature suited to all that Satan and the world set before us. How then shall we be able to stand and maintain our ground? Not at all; unless, like good Jehoshaphat, our minds are stayed upon the Lord, and with Him our hearts appeal against them, "O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee" (2 Chron. xx. 12). Oh, when the eye of our faith is upon Jesus and the glories of his kingdom, how contemptible does all the shining pomp or glittering vanity of this world appear! It all sinks in our eyes, it all dies in our esteem. For "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that

Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 4, 5.) As Christ dwells in the heart by faith, so his love casts out the love of the world, and gives the victory over it. So we find strength for every battle, enjoy peace in every conflict, and possess joy after every victory. For "in all things we are more than conquerors through Him who hath loved us." And "nothing shall be able to separate us from Christ's love." The firm belief of this inspires the soul with warm zeal in God's cause, and undaunted courage against the Lord's enemies and ours—the world, the flesh, and the devil.

3. We are called to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But unless our minds are stayed upon the Lord, seeing our Lord's love and grace to us in his commands and institutions, our minds will tire in duty, and we shall be ready to say with those of old, Behold what a weariness is it! "It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" (Mal. iii. 14.) They walked mournfully, they found no pleasure in waiting upon God. But why not? Truly, because the mind was not stayed upon Jesus—the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the sum and substance, the all in all, of what is was engaged in. But when the soul comes to ordinances with a firm belief of the love of Jesus to sinners, a sweet confidence in Him as the Friend of sinners, a steady dependence on Him as the Life of sinners, looking to Him as the Comforter

of sinners, and therefore engages in duties to enjoy his sweet presence, to hear more of his precious love, to be fed more with his rich grace, to be established more in the knowledge, faith, and love of his adorable Person, in the unsearchable riches of his grace and the perfection of his finished salvation, that Jesus may have the love of our whole hearts, the praises of our lips, and the obedience of our lives:—thus, when Jesus is looked to for all, lived upon in all, and studied to be glorified by all, we find that in waiting upon Him we renew our strength. Thus "the Lord gives peace by all means."

4. The Christian sometimes walks in darkness. Not in the darkness of sin. No; the children of God hate that, for it is contrary to the light of truth, the life of faith, and the constraints of love. They are "delivered from the power of such darkness" (Col. i. 13). But they often walk in darkness with respect to God's dispensations, both in providence and grace, towards them. Their affairs in providence may wear a gloomy aspect. With Jacob, they may be ready to say, "All these things are against me" (Gen. xlii. 36). One comfort is taken away. Such a blessing I am deprived of. This support fails me. That dependence is quite removed. Oh, but when the mind is stayed upon God, who will never leave nor forsake, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and who "makes all things to work together for good to them who love Him," and are called according to his purpose to know

Him—then we see that not one evil we feel and complain of, but sovereign love is in all! This brings peace and contentment to the heart. All is swallowed up in God's sovereignty; all is enjoyed in God's covenant love. But the frame of the Christian's mind may also be in darkness, and have no light. The Sun of righteousness may appear, as it were, eclipsed to his view. No stars to give light to the promises of God, and God himself hiding his face, and therefore the soul is troubled. This doth befal souls. But it is only for a season. The trouble they have on account of this shows their love to God and delight in Him. It also answers the good end that God intends by it. If He hide his face because they have offended Him, it makes the soul seek Him sorrowing, and causes it to prize the enjoyment of God's favour the more highly. Yet, in their darkest frames, the love of God is ever the same towards them—the God of peace is for them and at peace with them. Though it is very natural in darkness to mistake objects, and to draw false conclusions, "the darkness and the light are both alike to our Lord" (Ps. cxxxix. 12). His love is the same at all times to all his children, whether He caresses or chastises. His smiles are the tokens of an affectionate Father. His stripes are the chastisements of a loving Father. Both alike proceed from the love of his heart towards us. Suppose a tender parent to be angry with, and to correct his child; yet, if the child be at a distance in the dark for a season, the parent would discover its affection by inquiry after it.

Just so the Lord acts towards us. For He puts his tender and affectionate question, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light?" Doth our Lord leave such without hope, counsel, and direction? Doth He say, Let them walk on till the night of death overtake them, and the darkness of hell encompass them? No! blessed be his loving Name, there is love in the inquiry, there is comfort in the advice. For He adds, "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God" (Isa. l. 10), his covenant, his reconciled God. Covenant love changeth not. Covenant relations can never be broken. That is impossible. For they are "confirmed of God in Christ" (Gal. iii. 17). Who art thou then that sayest, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" O soul, remember, everlasting love—eternal truth—immutable faithfulness—inviolable promises—the solemn oath of God—all, all are engaged for the heirs of promise, who have fled to Jesus for refuge, to trust in and stay themselves upon in seasons of darkness, affliction, and desertion. To what end? Verily, that so they might have consolation, yea, strong consolation. For what is the name of our Lord? St. John tells us, "God is love" (1 John iv. 8). He is the "God of consolation" (Rom. xv. 5). When Peter was in darkness as to his Lord's designs, saith our Lord, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii. 7).

The time is drawing on apace—we shall very soon be where there shall be no more night; but it shall always be light and day with us. Then we shall see our Lord's love in all; that there was a needs-be for all; and we shall then praise Him for all. Let it suffice at present for us to know that the government of his Church, of our souls, and of all our concerns, is upon his shoulders who was "a Child, born for us; a Son, given to us; even Jesus, the Prince of peace;"—upon whom "the chastisement of our peace was laid;" who hath made peace for us, and will keep us in perfect peace, because our minds are stayed upon Him. And this we shall have need for in the last particular, namely—

5. In the solemn closing scene of life. We have a dreary passage to travel, before we arrive at the enjoyment of our Beloved. We must walk through the valley of the shadow of death. But what can change a substance into a shadow? Is not death a real thing? Why doth David call it a *shadow?* Because he spake by the same spirit as New Testament saints do. They call death sleep. This is but an image or representation of it. "Those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. iv. 14). Though death is a dreadful enemy to unbelievers, yet, "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again," death loses its horror, its ghastly face is changed, it comes with the smiles of love. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Why so? "Because Thou, O God my Saviour, art with me" (Ps. xxiii. 4). My mind is stayed

upon Thee; Thou wilt comfort me. Thus, faith in Jesus makes a bridge over the river of death. Well, therefore, may the Christian, at all times and in all seasons, say with confidence of spirit, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in Heaven, to trust in, but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. And though my flesh and my heart faileth, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Ps. lxxiii. 24–26). Though "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law," yet Jesus, by atoning for our sins and fulfilling the law for us, has disarmed death of his sting. So that in the triumph of faith we joyfully cry out, "O Death, where is thy sting?" It is left and lost in the body of Jesus. "O Grave, where is thy victory?" Jesus hath conquered thee for us. Therefore, "thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 55, &c.)—who giveth us the victory!

O my fellow-sinners, pray mind that. For this is a most precious word indeed to living, dying Christians! It is as if He had said, "Has sin begot and brought into the world two most dreadful and formidable monsters, death and the grave? Is sin, the sting of death, in your bodies? Is sin, armed with the strength of the law, against your bodies? Must your bodies soon and certainly die of this fatal sting, and fall victims under the resistless strength of the law? Yet, fear not: behold there is a perfect victory obtained for your souls." Verily,

Jesus, by his righteous life, atoning death, triumphant resurrection, glorious ascension, and eternal glorification, hath gained a complete and entire conquest over these enemies. The Gospel trumpet loudly proclaims the fact. This is joyful; but this is not all. For this victory is not only gained, proclaimed, and promised, but it is actually given. By whom? Even by God the Father, who is well pleased with, and is glorified by, the conquest of his own beloved Son; and, according to the good pleasure of his will and the purpose of his gracious heart, He giveth this victory. To whom? Even to us poor sinners; for He actually bestows on us—invests us with—imputes to us, and makes us sharers in, all the glorious conquests of our living Head. Jesus our dear Conqueror's righteous life is ours; therefore the law cannot condemn us. His atoning death is ours; therefore sin can never destroy us. His triumphant resurrection is ours—"God hath raised us up together with Him, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6); therefore, death and the grave can have no more dominion over us, the members of Jesus, than they have over Him, our living, risen, glorified Head. Now, all this is given to us and bestowed upon us by God the Father, through his beloved Son Jesus. All is of free gift, all is of rich grace, all is actually bestowed and really enjoyed. How? By whom? Who receive and enjoy this blessing? The faithful; all who believe in Jesus share in the love of his heart, the trophies of his cross, and the

victories of his crown. By faith we now receive the gift of victory, triumph in it, glory in it, and give abundant thanks to God, who freely bestows it upon us.

Oh, then, how precious is Jesus to those who believe! Precious in the day of life, more precious in the hour of death, most inestimably, yea, infinitely and everlastingly precious will He be through the never-ending days of eternity. Then, my fellow-sinners, we shall be for ever uninterruptedly reaping the spoils and enjoying the trophies of his glorious victory. Now we possess all in Divine faith; then we shall enjoy all in Divine sense. Now we live upon Jesus; then we shall live and reign with Jesus. Oh, then, study much, in the mount of contemplation, Jesus, your Life, your Conqueror, and your victories in Him! so that while you see nothing in your flesh but sin; and the consequence of it, misery; and the wages of it, death; you may behold and live upon Jesus, your righteousness.

Oh, how sweetly doth that late eminent minister of Jesus, Mr. Hervey, speak of this in his "Dialogues"! "Nothing is so sovereign as the righteousness of Christ to calm our fears and to remove all apprehensions of Divine wrath. It is a sure support for the Christian in an hour of desertion and in the agonies of death. Casting anchor on this bottom, he may dismiss every fear, and ride out every storm. Leaning upon this staff, he may go down to the repose of the grave, and neither be appalled at the solemn harbinger of dissolution, nor terrified at

its most awful consequences." And so, indeed, did this excellent man of God find it in the sweet experience of his own soul; for he comfortably fell asleep in the faith of Jesus, while these words quivered from his dying lips, "Precious salvation! Precious salvation!"

Thus the life of a Christian consists in a continued experience of his own weakness, a constant sense of his own vileness, daily feeling his own emptiness, and therefore ever seeing the need of his perpetual dependence on Christ, to receive out of his fulness. Thus Christ is to be lived upon as our life, our strength, our righteousness, and our salvation. Now this trusting and staying of the soul upon Jesus, as it keeps the heart humble, in close fellowship with Him, so it sets it at the greatest opposition against sin, which is in our members. And thus the soul enjoys true rest and real happiness in Christ; derives strength from Him, for the exercise of every grace, for the discharge of every duty, to resist every temptation, to withstand every enemy, for support under every trial, and to follow after holiness in this life, till the Christian has fought his fight, run his race, finished his course, and entered into glory. Thus Christ is all in all to the believing soul. And thus the Christian, by faith in Christ, walks with God, and enjoys his peace.

CHAPTER VI.

To be carnally-minded is contrary to all this.

We live in a day of great profession. May we not add, of great declension from the purity and peace of the Gospel? Look at the spirit and temper of professors; see their walk and conduct, and say, Are they such as become the Gospel of Christ? Verily, of many professors it may as truly be said, they are walking barefoot to Jerusalem, as that they are following the Son of God. The mind determines the walk. The outward conduct evidences the inward frame of the mind. If the mind is stayed upon God, the Christian cannot walk in the vanity of his mind, fulfilling the desires of the flesh. If he does, it is fully manifest that his mind is not stayed upon God. Is it any marvel such are not kept in peace? It would be strange indeed if they were. For it would be contrary to the nature of God, the word of his truth, and the purposes of his grace. Yea, it would be inconsistent with God's fatherly love towards them, as also incompatible with the good of their own souls. It is not consistent either with the love or wisdom of an earthly parent to caress, pamper, and indulge his child in a course of disobedience to his commands and rebellion against his will. Surely Infinite Wisdom knows better; surely Infinite Love acts otherwise.

See Gnosticus. He hears the enchanting sound of the Gospel. He is delighted with it.

He is joined to the people of God. He constantly fills up his seat at the place of worship. He regularly attends at the Lord's Table. But excepting all this, Gnosticus lives and walks all the week just as the rest of the world do. His mind is wholly taken up with, and his affections set upon, the things of this world. Perhaps he does not run to the same excess of riot as others. This, he thinks, would hurt his character as a professor; he is a companion of those who do. He resorts to the same places with them. He partakes of their pleasures. He thinks himself at full liberty to enjoy the same scenes of mirth and jollity. His mind is under no restraint as to the enjoyments of carnal amusements and sensual delights, which gratify the vitiated taste of corrupt minds, who know not God, and are strangers to the love of Christ. Sometimes he indulges himself at the playhouse. He frequently regales himself with the diversion of the card-table. And in a very serious mood Gnosticus demands, What harm is there in seeing a good play? what evil in an innocent game at cards? Now, these very questions discover the state of his mind, as his practices prove that it is not stayed upon God. Can it be supposed that the minds of such professors are kept in the peace and love of God? What harm! What evil! Is there no harm in having the mind diverted from God? No evil in the affections being turned to vanity, instead of being placed on God? No evil in precious moments being worse than lost, because vainly spent, instead of redeeming the time for the

service of God? No harm in lavishing money, of which we are stewards, to gratify the lust of the eye, instead of doing good to the poor members of Christ? No harm in being carnally-minded? Why, it is death! Death to the hope, love, peace, and joy of the soul. Yea, most awful to think of, eternal death to the soul itself, if lived and died in!

Go to that sordid miser whose gold is his god, whose mind is set upon, and whose happiness centres in, his riches; bid him leave his bags for the unsearchable riches of Christ, be rich in good works, and give to the poor. He will tell you his happiness lies another way. His mind is set upon a different object. All those would draw off his attention from his grand pursuit. He has neither time nor inclination for this.

Tell that gentleman of pleasure of the joys of religion, and the infinite pleasures there are in fellowship with God and his Son Jesus Christ; invite him to leave his pursuits after earthly pleasures, and to give up himself to seek those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. You will find his heart too strongly attached to other objects to forsake them. His mind is his kingdom. He can be happy only while pursuing what his mind is set upon.

Address that gentleman whose mind is set upon the honours of this world. Assure him that Christ is an honour to them who believe. Tell him the King of kings has declared, "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Sam. ii. 30). He would reply, My mind is fixed upon the

honours from the noble and wealthy; religion would make me contemptible in their eyes. Leave me to my mind, and do you enjoy yours.

Now, each of these discovers what his mind is fixed upon. And are the miser, the man of pleasure, and the man who seeks the honours of this world, more faithful to the gods they serve than thou, who dost profess to serve the living, the loving, and true God, who alone can make thy soul happy in time, and happy in eternity? Oh, blush at thyself—be ashamed at thy conduct! Talk no more of thy notions of Christianity, and thy knowledge of Divine truths. Verily, all seem but empty speculations to thee; for where are thine affections? upon whom is thy mind stayed? If on the Lord, thou wilt be following on to know Him, and turning away from those objects which tend to draw thy heart from Him. Dost thou talk highly of Gospel truths? Dost thou greatly extol the perfections of Jehovah in the scheme of salvation, and yet walkest in the vanity of thy mind, after the lust of thine heart, and the sight of thine eyes? Take knowledge of thyself. Truly thy conduct is just like a husband who pretends the greatest affection for his wife, is ever extolling her person, and raising the highest encomiums upon her conduct, and yet, after all, he doth not keep chaste to her, nor make up all his happiness in her, but, when disposed, goes "a-whoring after his own imaginations."

O Christian, dost thou really believe there is

such a thing as pleasing Satan, dishonouring our God and Saviour, grieving his Holy Spirit, offending thy Christian brethren, and wounding the peace of thy own mind? Be assured thou canst not more effectually do all this than by walking after the course of this present evil world. Complain no more of leanness and barrenness of soul, of doubts and fears, of want of peace of mind, comfort of heart, and joy in the Holy Ghost. How canst thou expect these while thy heart wanders from thy God—thy mind is not stayed upon Him—and thou art not content to make up all thy happiness in communion with Him? Surely, living by faith on the Son of God is living above the low and carnal gratifications of corrupt lusts and having "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." Remember, God gives his Holy Spirit in his comforts and joys only to those who obey Him in their life and walk (Acts v. 32). If one were to see a person who was believed to be a real Christian, entering the doors of a theatre, should not one be naturally led to reason thus? —"Is that the person who professed, at the Lord's Table, to 'present his soul and body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, as his reasonable service?' who solemnly confessed his past ways to be grievous, and besought the grace of God that he might 'hereafter serve and please Him in newness of life?' Is this he, who, the other day, talked so sweetly of the love of Christ, and the peace of God, and so earnestly contended for the truths of the Gospe ? Alas, what do I now see! Surely if he really believed

these things in his heart—if he enjoyed the peace of God in his soul—he could not enter those doors, lest his mind should be diverted from God, his soul lose the sweet sense of his peace, and his heart be filled with sorrow. If his mind enjoys not now the sense of God's peace, sure he never can go there to seek it. Though I rejoice at his confession before many witnesses, yet I now grieve at his conduct. Is he now acting like one who feels the importance of eternal things upon his mind? Is he now giving all diligence to work out the salvation of his precious soul, and to make his great calling and election sure? O Christian, I must leave thee! The vows of the Lord are upon thee. The Lord will visit, and thy soul will surely smart for these things."

And how must the Christian himself reason (if any such are to be found), who can fill up a seat at such places? Is not this very natural?—"Hath it pleased the God of love to give his beloved Son to die for me, to save me from sin and hell? Have I, through his grace, heard the voice of Jesus in his Word? Have I found in Him rest and peace to my soul? Do I profess to be a disciple and follower of the Son of God? Do I believe his Word to be the rule of my faith, and Jesus the Exemplar of my life? Hath my Lord bid me 'deny myself, and take up my cross and follow Him'? But whither am I now going? Is this walking as Christ walked? Is this following the steps of my Lord? Is this obeying his loving commands? Can I expect to enjoy the sense of my Saviour's com-

forts there? Shall I not be sorry for this hereafter? Will it not cause my head to hang down, and my heart to be dejected, when I approach his throne of grace? And, oh, shall I not be ashamed of my conduct, when I appear before Him at his coming? Can I then, upon cool reflection, deliberately enter those doors in faith? Consider, O my soul, what kind of address would be suitable upon such an occasion. Surely not such a one as this—

"O God, my Saviour, Thou hast called me to follow Thee, 'to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful desires of the flesh.' Thou hast assured me, 'As many as are led by thy Spirit, they are thy children.' Thou hast commanded, whatever I do in word and deed, to do all in thy name, to thy glory. Can I appeal to Thee, Thou great Searcher of hearts, that I am now following Thee to a house of pleasure and vanity? Am I now led by thy Holy Spirit to gratify the desires of my flesh, the lust of my eye, and the vanity of my mind? I am not my own, but bought with the price of thy precious blood: O Christ, can I, in thy Name, and in this way, glorify Thee with my body and spirit, which are thine? Can I expect, while at the playhouse, to enjoy the sense of thy love, the witness of thy Spirit, and the feeling of comfort and joy from Thee, which 'passeth all understanding'? Can my mind be stayed on Thee, O Lord, while attentively engaged at the scenes of the theatre? And wilt Thou, my Lord, accept such devotion of my heart and time?" &c.

Now, where is the Christian but would shudder at such an address? But actions speak louder, and are a truer index of the mind, than words. Christian, canst thou use such a prayer in faith? If not, canst thou go to the play in faith? Remember, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23). Indeed, such a kind of prayer should not have attained a place here but as a mirror, to expose the inconsistency of the Christian's walk in deliberately allowing himself in such gratifications, which are not agreeable to the word of God, to his faith and hope as a follower of the Son of God, which have no tendency to promote the peace of his mind and the glory of God, and upon which he cannot pray for the blessing of God. Such reasoning, and such a view of prayer, are suitable also to expose all other kinds of gratification which tend to draw away the mind from being stayed upon God, and enjoying communion with God in Christ Jesus. But, perhaps, treating of these outward things may be condemned by some professors, as dwelling on trifles of no moment. This very objection fully indicates the necessity for it; while it manifests what a low, carnal, sensual frame of mind such are sunk into. Can they be delighted with such trifles? Do things of no moment call off their attention from God's heavenly love and sweet peace in Jesus? Are they not ashamed that trifles light as air should take up their precious moments, engage their affections, dissipate their minds, and prevent their pursuit after "the one thing needful?" Surely then, love to our Lord,

zeal for his cause, regard for precious souls, cause one to be bold to testify against them. Is there not cause? Is the Christian's walk of no moment? Is his example of no consequence? Is the peace of his mind, with which the exemplariness of his walk is connected, such a trifle? Are we exhorted, "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21); "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Col. iii. 15)?

Consider the meaning of these words. Remember, these exhortations are from the same Spirit who assures us God hath loved us with an everlasting love, so as to give his only begotten Son to save us. Therefore, they demand the same attention. Sure, somewhat is implied in them which it is the duty of Christians to be constantly engaged in. Though we are not agents in procuring salvation for our souls, yet certainly, as being "made wise unto salvation," we are called to walk so as to please God; "not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." What can the Holy Ghost mean by these exhortations—"Keep yourselves in the love of God;" "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts?" Surely nothing less than—

1. Carefully abstaining from such things as in their own nature have a direct tendency to defile the purity of the mind, dissipate the thoughts, carnalize the affections, and quicken delight in the gratifications of sense; for these certainly draw the heart from God and the sweet sense of his peace and love. Though

such things were not forbidden by the Word of God (but they absolutely are), yet it is the wisdom of a Christian to abstain from them; not considering only their lawfulness, but their expediency, and also to weigh well the tendency of them. For that professor who willingly allows himself in such gratifications as are contrary to the peace and purity of his mind, thereby declares by actions, which speak plain as words, "I prefer this thing of no moment, even this trifle, to the peace and love of God; this I will enjoy, and I am careless whether my heart is kept in the sense of God's love and peace, or not." Ah, but if our hearts were right with God, if we did not deceive our souls with notions of doctrines in the head without the grace of those doctrines in our hearts, we should see the absolute necessity of "abstaining from the very appearance of evil;" we should feel the love of God constraining to this; we should experience that our souls cannot be kept happy in the love of God and sensible of the peace of God, but while we are engaged in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world and its idols. But—

2. These exhortations positively imply a diligent use of such means of grace as have a direct tendency to accomplish those blessed ends, and which, through the grace of the Eternal Spirit, most certainly will; for "the Lord gives his people peace by all means." The means of grace are most wisely calculated to keep the soul lively in the sense of the peace and love of God, and in the hopes of glory. Therefore we may

be sure, if the means of grace are neglected, the God of all grace is slighted. If carnal gratifications are indulged, dejecting fears will be promoted. Careless walking will be attended with comfortless believing. Sensual joys will bring on spiritual griefs. That Christian who walks not close with God in the means of grace will necessarily be the subject of many awful suspicions and distressing doubts of his eternal state. And—

3. In order to keep ourselves in the love of God, and that the peace of God may rule in our hearts, we are thus exhorted: "Build up yourselves on your most holy faith." In building up our souls upon Jesus Christ, the foundation, we are daily to be fetching one truth after another from the Word of God, concerning the life, death, resurrection, and finished salvation of Jesus for us. By exercising our believing minds upon the love of God to us in Jesus Christ, and the peace of God obtained for us in Christ, we grow more established in the faith of Him—feel our souls more sensibly united to Him—have more intimate fellowship with Him, and more comfortable enjoyment of Him, —and all this by our faith, our most holy faith. While we are thus building up ourselves upon our faith in Jesus, we become dead to all sinful joys, worldly vanities, and sensual delights. Our hearts being engaged with our Beloved, we despise and trample them as dirt under our feet, in comparison to the enjoyment of the love and peace of God in Christ Jesus. Again—

4. "Praying in the Holy Ghost."—This is another blessed means to keep ourselves in the sense of God's love and peace. Pray evermore. "Pray without ceasing." Our minds are ever to be in a praying frame. "In the Holy Ghost;" in the words He hath taught us; agreeable to his truths revealed to us; for the fulfilment of the precious promises He hath given us in Christ Jesus, and as helped by his grace and power. Oh, this constant frame of spirit raises our hearts above seeking after low, carnal joys and worldly delights. And—

5. Would we keep ourselves in the love of God, &c., we are called upon to be "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Oh, this daily, constant looking to Jesus for mercy, implies a constant sense of misery in ourselves, and the assured hope of eternal life in the enjoyment of Jesus; while it preserves us in a sense of the love and peace of God, it elevates the affections above the vanities of time and the pleasures of sense. Thus we see the work, the duty, yea, the privileges of Christians; what they are to be engaged in; what they are to abstain from. The Lord knows, and the Christian knows also, that he is called daily to work enough of self-denial, mortification, watchfulness, striving against sin, and following after holiness; to approve himself to God, to have the testimony of a good conscience, and to justify his faith before men, without carrying his heart into the midst of lusts and temptations; for this is willingly and deliberately to expose one's self to dangers.

It is but solemn mocking of God, to run into the midst of temptations, and then to pray Him to keep one from the evil of them; it is to tempt our Lord, to expect Him to keep our minds in peace in such places, to which we are not called by his providence, and from which we may be sure not to return without a sting in our minds, and a wound to the peace of our conscience. Indeed, it is quite natural for the children of this world, which lieth in wickedness, to have their plays, routs, assemblies, balls, card-tables, &c. Poor souls! their minds are suited to these things; they would be miserable without them; they have no relish for spiritual joys; they are ever crying, "Who will show us any good?" They are seeking all good in the enjoyment of sense. It is misery to them to indulge one serious thought on death, one solemn reflection on eternity. But what have the children of God to do with their carnal pleasures? Their minds are formed for more refined joys. The language of renewed souls is, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us;" that alone can make us happy. The apostle's reasoning in another case is quite applicable here: "When I was carnal, I spake as a carnal man, I understood as a carnal man, I lived and acted as a carnal man; but when I became spiritual, I put away carnal things." Is it not "meet, right, and our bounden duty" so to do? How else do we bear our testimony to the glory of Jesus, and the honour of his religion? For, are our bodies the temples of the Holy Ghost? Are we

bought with the precious blood of Jesus? Then surely we have no right to go where we please, or to do what we will. We are not our own. We are the Lord's property. We are bound by the strongest ties of faith, love, and hope, "to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are God's." O Holy Spirit, who hast thus taught us in thy word, do Thou influence us to this by thy power! Again—

Hath our Lord "given himself to redeem us from all iniquity, that He might purify us to himself, as a peculiar people, zealous of good works"? How can it appear we are of this happy number? Merely because we have peculiar notions in our head from the rest of the world? No, truly. For unless we have peculiar affections in our hearts, which the men of the world are strangers to, and are peculiarly distinguished in our lives and conversations from them, truly we shall have reason to suspect whether we are of God, or of the world. For if there is nothing peculiar in our outward walk, in sacrificing our lusts, and dying to sin from love to Christ, verily it is a sad evidence that there is no peculiar love to Christ in our hearts. It is the essential character of those who are justified by faith; they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Suppose our dear Lord were to call to us from heaven, and assure us that we should live many years upon earth; what Christian would say, "I thank Thee, Lord, I love to live at a distance from Thee; I prefer the gratifications of my corrupt sense to communion with Thee in

my heart; and now I shall have a long season to walk after the flesh, and to indulge myself in the delights of sense"? It matters not whether any would say this with their lips if the conduct of their lives loudly proclaims it. But our blessed Lord doth really speak to us, in the very last words that ever we shall hear from Him till we see his blessed face in glory, and hear Him pronounce, "Come, ye blessed," —and, "Go, ye cursed." Hear the Son of God. Behold, He speaketh to me who write, and to thee who readest, "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20). Come! To what end? Most awfully glorious! Most tremendously dreadful! Rejoice with trembling. For, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that obey not his Gospel." Oh, most solemn sight! we shall see Jesus, "our God, in grandeur, and the world in flame." But, oh, most joyful view! "He shall also come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. i. 10). Oh, with what resplendent lustre will the glory of Jesus then shine forth, in his perfect redemption—in his complete salvation—in his eternal glorification, of that great multitude which no man can number! How will He then be most gloriously admired in his everlasting love to them —in his everlasting righteousness upon them —in his everlasting salvation of them—and in all his grace and glory which shall then be displayed in them. Oh, may we now realize the view of this by faith, admire Jesus in our hearts,

cleave to Him with our affections, honour Him in our lives, be daily looking for his appearing, and constantly longing after his coming; that our hearts may joyfully reply, "Even so, come Lord Jesus!" Amen, and Amen.

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